

BLUE BOOK

Magazine,

April

15 cents



The fascinating sequel to

HAWK of the WILDERNESS

H. Bedford-Jones, Robert Mill, James Francis Dwyer

A Red Wolf of Arabia story by William Makin

NIX ON PARTIES —with my crop of PIMPLES!

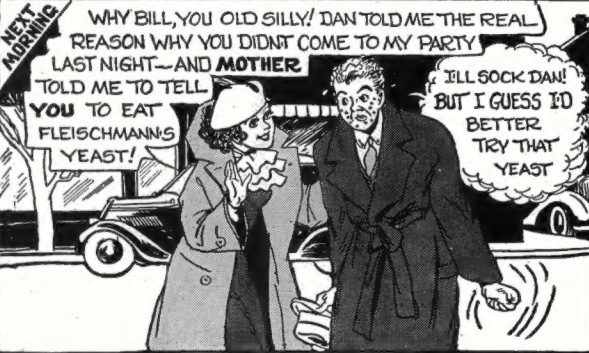
BUT
THERE
IS
HOPE FOR
BILL

DOGGONE IT! I DID WANT TO
GO TO DOT'S BIRTHDAY
PARTY TONIGHT! A
FINE SIGHT I'D BE!



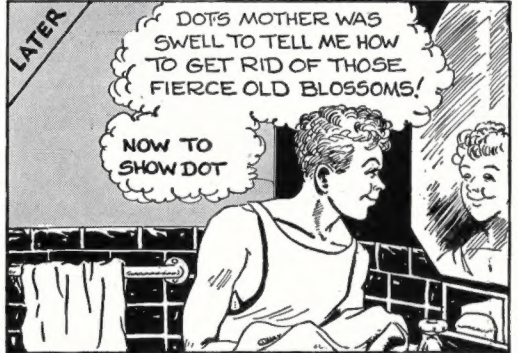
SAY, WHAT'S EATING
YOU? GOING TO
DOT'S PARTY
TONIGHT?

OF **COURSE** NOT,
DAN. LOOK AT
THESE LIFE-SIZED
PIMPLES AND SEE
WHY!!



WHY BILL, YOU OLD SILLY! DAN TOLD ME THE REAL
REASON WHY YOU DIDN'T COME TO MY PARTY
LAST NIGHT—AND **MOTHER**
TOLD ME TO TELL
YOU TO EAT
FLEISCHMANN'S
YEAST!

I'LL SOCK DAN!
BUT I GUESS I'D
BETTER
TRY THAT
YEAST



DOT'S MOTHER WAS
SWELL TO TELL ME HOW
TO GET RID OF THOSE
FIERCE OLD BLOSSOMS!

NOW TO
SHOW DOT



WHY, BILL—IT **WORKED!**
NOT A PIMPLE LEFT! WE'LL
HAVE TO HAVE ANOTHER
PARTY—TO CELEBRATE

MY IDEA, TOO!
DOT, YOU'RE
WONDERFUL

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irritants out of your blood. Then
pimples disappear!

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skin is entirely clear. Start today.



—clears the skin
by clearing skin irritants
out of the blood

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BLUE BOOK



APRIL, 1936

MAGAZINE

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Painted by Herbert Morton Stoops

Except for stories of Real Experience, all stories and novels printed herein are fiction and are intended as such. They do not refer to real characters or to actual events. If the name of any living person is used, it is a coincidence.

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KIOGA of the



As Hawk of the Wilderness you knew him first—a white boy growing to valiant manhood in the newfound primeval frontier whence came, perhaps, the forefathers of the American Indian. Here you read of his amazing return to the strange wild land of his birth.

THE dawning of that day is unforgettable in my memory. The Arctic breeze was chill, and sharp as the ice-cakes scraping and tearing along the steel sides of the whaler *Bearcat*, bulling her path steadily through the floes off the north Alaskan coast.

Breath poured from my nostrils thick as cigarette smoke, condensing to hoarfrost on the collar of my great-coat. The

southern sky was warmly aglow, crossed by alternating fanlike rays of red and bluish gray, reaching and broadening high into the vault. When the slim rim of the solar disk appeared, it was a brilliant green, blending into blue—the curious optical phenomenon known as the “green flash.” Even the sun was strange on that memorable morning.

At my side, elbows on rail and shaggy

WILDERNESS



By WILLIAM L. CHESTER

Illustrated by Jeremy Cannon

iron-gray head a little bent, stood Captain Phineas Scott, thoughtful and silent. Since apparently he had not heard my earlier question, I put it to him again.

"Three years is a long time for the *Narwhal* to be missing. Do you think she could have survived, or—"

"Aye—ye asked me that before," he answered to my prompting. "I heard ye, sir. But faith," he continued, pur-

suings anew a line of thought that evidently fascinated him more than did the missing *Narwhal*, "I was thinkin' more of him ye call Kioga the Snow Hawk. There, bedad, is one who led a strange life if ever man did!" Holding up an immense red paw, he told off on his fingers some of the dates relating to the story I had recounted to him. "'Bout nineteen-two 'twas, when Lincoln Rand



With feelings of utmost relief, I ascertained that neither was Munro or anyone else known to me.

and his wife set sail in the ship *Cherokee*, accompanied by an Injin named Mokuyi. They get wrecked on an unknown inhabited land in the North, which is overrun by red-skinned men like our American Injins. Sometime later they have a little one, which the natives give the name Kioga. When his parents are killed, he's adopted into the tribe, an' grows up to be a high chief among them. So far am I right?"

Scott undeniably has a retentive memory. I nodded, irritated a little by his continued failure to answer my question regarding the missing schooner *Narwhal*.

"YET," continued Scott, as if unaware of this, "nobody civilized knows anything about Kioga until the yacht *Alberta* sinks in the Arctic. Me an' my ship take on the survivors, abandoning Kioga to save the rest, who rave about new inhabited land in the Arctic until we think them mad. Later on Dr. James Munro, skipper of the science-ship *Narwhal* picks Kioga up. Dr. Munro takes him to the States, where he lives awhile. Then, sick o' civ'lization, Kioga starts back for his native land. That brings us to the late '20s. Then the *Narwhal* goes out to search for Kioga and gets lost. And here are we, now on the *Bearcat*, lookin' for the *Narwhal*!"

Having thus briefly chronicled the events leading up to our presence together on his ship, he sucked noisily at his cold pipe. Then: "Ye've been the whole night tellin' me Kioga's story—me who should have been in my bunk hours ago! But what I want to know is, what happened to Kioga *after* he left civilization!"

"Find the schooner *Narwhal*," I reminded him, triumphant at being able to pin him down at last, "and you may get an answer."

The brow of Captain Scott clouded. "I'm a whalin' skipper, sir," he answered. "Not a fortune-teller. But knowin' what I do of the Arctic Ocean, I'd say ye've seen the last any man ever will see of the good ship *Narwhal*." Puffing reflectively at his pipe, he continued: "'Tis three years and more since she went away, in search of that strange new land you call *Nato'wa*. That's how ye calc'late, is't not?"

"To the day, almost," I answered, with the accuracy of one who had weighed every factor of time, risk and possibility in this peculiar case of the Arctic against the schooner *Narwhal*.

"Then, give it up, sir," answered the burly skipper, laying a great hand on my shoulder. "I'll not delude ye with false hopes. Ye seek only a ship's ghost. The *Narwhal* herself has gone to Davy Jones's locker long ago, so she has, sir."

I knew what the assertion meant to that honest, four-square old tar. The whaling industry is not what it once was; profitable chartering by well-to-do Americans in search of lost ships doesn't await a master in every harbor. Yet though by his words he had sacrificed a small fortune, Phineas Scott calmly turned his attention back to the sunrise, blurred now by a bank of mist moving across the waters.

The *Bearcat* steamed silently through a stretch of open sea. A seaman's cough sounded distinctly from eighty feet up in the crow's-nest. The air itself grew somewhat warmer as the mists thickened round about the moving ship, and for a little time silence reigned supreme. And then—

With startling suddenness, loud as thunder, the voice of the lookout roared down:

"Schoo-o-ner! Schooner aho-o-y! Two points off the starboard bow!"

SCOTT jumped as if stung. Together we both wheeled, facing forward. What I then saw I should scarce have believed if recounted to me by another.

Bearing down on us was the hugest ship my gaze had ever fallen on, coming slowly on, like some overpowering Colossus, beneath which we must surely go under to destruction.

A stentorian roar at my ear was Scott's voice, raised in command.

"Port your helm!"

Came the helmsman's instant response.

"Helm over, sir!"

"Half-speed ahead!"

"Half-speed—aye, sir!"

Came then the muffled clangor of the engine-room bell, and a sensible diminution of the ship's way. Excited shouts and the pound of running feet echoed aboard as the men off watch came awake and rushed on deck.

Only vaguely conscious of these sounds, instinctively I leaped behind the deck-house, there to brace myself against the shock of collision when that looming vessel should crash into us. And then I heard Scott's reassuring voice.

"All right, sir—all's well."

I turned at the words, not a little astonished by his calm, and moved to



In all cases save him who sat erect, external violence had preceded death. "Am I daft!" Captain Scott exclaimed.

where I could again look upon that terrifying image. It was gone as if it had never existed, though the fog still hung thick on the water, tinted by sunrise colors!

"Talk of a phantom, and 'twill surely appear," laughed the skipper. "But 'tish't often a body comes along with the ghost!"

"You mean to say that what we saw was a phantom?" I demanded, with all the incredulity of the tenderfoot in the North.

"Mist-magic, sir," he assured me in all seriousness. "Though some call it 'looming,' when fog magnifies a ship like that."

"But it was a ship?"

"Aye!" And now the Captain's voice quivered with excitement. "Look across the sea, there, through that scatterin' fog-bank. What d'ye see?"

For a moment I saw nothing but ocean vapors. Most all the hands had gathered forward with an excitement akin to mine, having long watched for just such a meeting. Then from aloft came the look-out's cry, taking the words fairly out of my mouth.

"Schooner aho-oy! Dead ahead! It's the *Narwhal*!"

VAGUE and dim through the rosy mists that overhung the sea, came a ship—a schooner under shortened sail, making slow headway toward the *Bearcat*. My heart leaped with exultation. It was the long-overdue *Narwhal*, Munro's adventure-ship.

Never do I think again to see a sight so rare and wonderful.

She was a thing of pastel beauty, a fairy creation of snow and frost, the ice-coat on her all afire, her hull agleam like plated gold, her yards and spars all glittering with reddish sunlight, her hanging anchor a silver double-crook, carved with ice-designs in high relief and hung on clearest crystal rope. And in the mirror of the sea the splendor of her image floated.

Yet what about her chilled me deep, made me expect the worst that could befall? This: She seemed the very soul of solitude, lone and inexpressibly forlorn—but why I could not quickly understand.

No less excited than myself, who searched the fog-obscured decks of the *Narwhal* keenly with binoculars, the crew crowded forward, waiting for her to come within hailing distance. The fog-horn

bellow of Captain Scott rolled across the water:

"Aho-o-y! *Narwhal*! Welcome home!"

Ensued a pause. The thunderous echo of Scott's mighty voice beat back from the *Narwhal's* flank, now little more than half a cable's-length broadside of us. But from the *Narwhal* no sign, no sound, no slightest evidence of having heard our hail. No movement on her icy decks—a silent ship, moving slowly astern on a silent sea.

A steamy *whoooooom!* from the *Bearcat's* whistle brought no more response. I found Scott's narrowed eyes boring into mine beneath his rime-rimmed brows.

"There's your *Narwhal*, sure enough," he said. "But somethin' must be wrong aboard." Then, without awaiting my answer, he gave the order to go about. In answering the helm, the *Bearcat* took the little wind from the *Narwhal's* sail, which slatted noisily as she yawed to port, drifting under our lee. From astern a rope leaped from a seaman's hands, to fall upon the *Narwhal's* after bitts. A moment later she was bound to our side, fore and aft. Scott turned to me.

"Come along!" he snapped. Down the ladder he went, to tread the *Narwhal's* icy decks. Close upon his heels came I.

None save Munro, her owner, knew better than I the physical equipment of this modern ship when she left for the Arctic. What changes I saw aboard of her are burned indelibly into my memory. As for Scott:

"Christ save us!" he exclaimed after a quick glance about the gleaming decks. "'Tis the *Narwhal*, sure enough. But what in God's name did they do to her!"

FOR the *Narwhal's* remaining sail was not canvas, but some coarse woven stuff defying description, and punctured with ragged holes torn through as by a blast of grape-shot.

Her foremast was split and scored beneath a rude binding of hand-twisted rope; and imbedded in its base beneath the fracture at the deck-line was a round sphere of pitted rusty iron—an old-style cannon-ball of medium caliber.

Forward of her deck-house, mounted upon a wooden block and built to swivel, was a small weapon of cast iron, shaped much like a medieval saker. The strange cannon had been fired, and contained neither shot nor powder, though near by were several six-pound balls,

imbedded in ice, which also coated the gun-carriage.

From one side of the deck-house a little aft, protruded a thin piece of reddish metal, a hard-thrown knife-blade whose handle, broken off, lay in the scuppers. Farther astern, on the same side, piercing deep the deck-house wall, was a scattered group of long arrows, the feathers scarcely ruffled. A spear, bladed with copper, was wedged between the after mast and a rope coil which was also of crude hand-manufacture. Far astern a heavier battery, of the size known as demi-cannon, was mounted in oak, bolted to the deck. The wheel was lashed, the lashings ice-sheathed.

ALL this I saw as I moved toward where Captain Scott battered at the deck-house hatch, which presently came open before his heavy exertions. A moment he vanished within, while I struggled across the slippery deck. When I reached the deck-house, he was emerging, his face noticeably pale. Our eyes met, mine questioning his.

"There's death down there," he answered solemnly. "I'll let ye go in first—they may be your dead, sir. But if ye want me, sing out."

"Better come with me now," I replied, oddly reluctant to go below alone.

God alone knows with what dread I passed through the narrow hatch into that funeral ship, followed by Scott. As my eyes became accustomed to the interior darkness I started, feeling the hairs on my neck rise. A man faced me stiffly, staring unwaveringly. Beneath his hand lay a few sheets of paper, covered with writing, and also a chart of some kind. In the breeze from the open door a lock of hair blew up and fell before the staring eyes. I was grateful for that breeze. Otherwise the thing did not move.

"Dead," muttered Scott softly; and indeed this was a man of ice, frozen stiff with open eyes, perfectly preserved in this natural refrigerator, the ice-clad *Narwhal*.

I knew every man of Munro's crew. This man, however, I had never seen before. Nor had I laid eyes upon him who lay dead with crossed hands upon a bunk near by. Forward was the fore-castle, empty of humanity. Aft was the main cabin through which I passed to Munro's own quarters, via the engine-room. Therein it was darker still. The porthole blinds were drawn.

On the floor two more forms met my gaze. With feelings of utmost relief, I ascertained that neither was Munro, nor anyone else known to me. Nor were there any other bodies on the death-ship. But I subjected those we had found to the minutest scrutiny, and proceeded from surprise to surprise.

When death overtook them, these men had worn apparel not of woven or loomed cloth, but of deerskin, fringed on arm and trousers leg. The boots on the feet were crudely made, and soled with leather twice the thickness of cowhide.

"Starved, or froze to death," guessed Scott; and I all but agreed when I made a startling discovery. In all cases save him who sat erect, external violence had preceded death. The body nearest the door bore an arrow in its breast. The second was twice pierced through the vitals low down, and transversely from arm to arm through the thorax; and both arrows were intact. The man in the bunk—a round clean bullet-hole, blue-circled in the brow, and running through the back of the head, told its grim tale.

OTHER strange facts aboard the *Narwhal* brought an exclamation of mixed bewilderment and incredulity from Captain Scott.

"Am I daft," he exclaimed fiercely, "or had I one nip too many from the brandy-jug!"

My eyes followed his glance. Beneath the ports in the owner's quarters was a rack laden with old-fashioned flintlock pistols, no two exactly alike. Just above them hung several old-style muzzle-loading rifles, between which were horns filled with black grains—gunpowder. In one corner hung a small melting-pot, half-filled with cold solid lead—source of the bullets for these antiquated arms. Beneath it was a small oil-stove. In every available place were curved knives, cutlasses and swords, exactly like none of which one finds among old museum collections. The modern owner's quarters of this modern ship were thus a veritable armory, containing not one up-to-date rifle or pistol in its entire fighting equipment.

Dr. Munro's most valued possession, his photographic equipment, was scattered, and a small motion-picture camera, dented by gunshot, lay on a shelf just under a porthole. To one side was the scientist's work-room. Here was ample evidence of his activities in the new land.



"Starved, or froze to death," guessed Captain Scott. . . . From under one hand of him who sat erect, I removed scribbled notes and chart.

In a great chest I found dozens of bows, arrows, knives, feather headdresses and works of native art. Two of these were most extraordinary. One was the body of a stuffed bird, resembling a great hawk, its curved beak engraved with beautiful miniature Indian heads. The other was a pair of walrus tusks, attached to a dry skull, similarly carved with effigies and crests. These were labeled in conservative scientific language: "*Very unusual. Source unknown.*"

Deep in one chest was a masterpiece of feather-robe making, in many harmonizing colors. But most amazing of all, an immense curving ivory tusk, waist-thick in diameter, (and measuring, we found later, almost fourteen feet in length), hung crosswise from corner to corner from the ceil-beams. A tag hung from it. It read, again in Munro's hand: "*Elph. primigenius. Habitat unknown.*"

There were other chests and lockers, all filled with primitive articles which amply evidenced Munro's successful contact with the natives of Nato'wa. And in one I found a piece of brass, lettered "*Cherokee.*" The scientist had come upon fragments of his friends' lost ship!

Going through Munro's personal closet, I found what I most eagerly sought, his diary, the record of his accomplishment, wrapped in layers of deerskin and tied with a leather thong.

CAMERA, diary and chests were removed to a place of greater safety on board the whaler alongside. From under the hand of him who sat erect forward, I removed scribbled notes and chart. All day the crew labored, and nothing was left that might be damaged during the long salvage-tow back to the coast. By now it was nearly dark, and bitterly cold, the short day waning. We worked by lantern-light. The men were hoisting the last chest from the *Narwhal* to the *Bearcat* when I returned to the cabin for my own lantern and to arrange suitable burial for the *Narwhal's* unknown dead.

As I opened the door, there was a muffled explosion. The ship was afire, already blazing fiercely.

My lantern—gunpowder in the horns, and perhaps on the floor! I had little time to reproach myself for my carelessness, for on the whaler there was wild activity. The after line, cut with a hatchet, slipped into the sea, and the *Narwhal's* stern drifted free. Scott was bawling down at me from the rail.

"Grab the ladder and we'll haul ye

aboard! Jump, man! She has gunpowder forward!"

A last look back, and I knew it was too late to stop the blaze. I leaped, seized the rope ladder and was hauled up. The *Bearcat* drew away out of the danger-zone. The schooner behind was afire from stem to stern, blazing and crackling, the ice upon her melting fast. . . . A moment later the deckhouse seemed to rise in mid-air. As the sound of the explosion reached us, the entire ship erupted like a volcano. There was another silence; then the terrific detonation of gunpowder. Ten seconds later the *Narwhal* started for the bottom, quenching her death-agony in the Arctic Sea.

A shot from the bow rang out sharply—salute to the dead from the *Bearcat's* whaling harpoon-gun.

Above the swirling waters a column of smoke lingered. Prosaic Captain Scott was not without an imaginative spark. It was he who said:

"There sinks a mystery-ship, boys, God rest her! With one sail set, and all hands dead aboard, she had a strange tale to tell, whatever 'twas. And look ye now!"—to me, at the rail beside him. "D'ye not see a g'int question-mark over her grave?"

I nodded agreement, for though the smoke-formation had little resemblance to a "question-mark," I knew what Scott meant. Here was another riddle, of which the sea propounds so many.

But it was a riddle to which I had the key. Alone in my cabin, to refresh my memory, I re-read an unfinished paper, written by my friend Dr. James Munro, famous polar scientist and authority on the American Indian, before he sailed away. It ran, in part, as follows:

THE AMERICAN INDIAN AND HIS ORIGIN

At the beginning of this century my colleague, Dr. Lincoln Rand of California, his wife Helena, and his intimate friend and aide, the full-blooded Indian Mokuyi, sailed from San Francisco in the hospital-ship *Cherokee*. They intended to bestow free medicine and treatment upon certain primitive Indians of the Pacific Coast. Fate, however, decreed otherwise.

There came to be written in the *Cherokee's* log two of the most remarkable discoveries of modern times. One was a hitherto unknown land called Nato'wa,—somewhere north of Siberia,—upon which storms hurled the *Cherokee*. The other

was a race inhabiting it, unmistakably cousins of the American Indian.

Twenty years after the discovery, the outer world still knew nothing of this land and its peoples, for the *Cherokee* never brought her passengers home. Seeking vainly for traces of my missing friends, one of whom was particularly dear to me, I finally conceded their deaths.

Then came a tragedy which gripped the world—the sinking of the missing American yacht *Alberta* in the Arctic, and the dramatic rescue of her survivors by the whaler *Bearcat*. Two deserting sailors had to be abandoned, however—as was a third man. This third man, according to the radio broadcast of names by the *Bearcat*, was Lincoln Rand!

Hastening to the scene in my schooner *Narwhal*, I located and took aboard this Lincoln Rand—not the friend I had long sought, but his surviving son! This young man, born and raised in the new wilderness of Nato'wa, bore the Indian name Kioga, meaning the *Snow Hawk*. He had preserved the *Cherokee's* logbook and kept a curious record of his own life in pictograph, hieroglyph and mnemonic signs—all drawn upon a buffalo-hide.

From the logbook and the buffalo-skin, and from photographs which sustained these records, came a strange and amazing biography, which it is my intention to publish in the near future.

I submit these statements by way of introducing this new evidence to disprove two accepted scientific theories. In my opinion the Indian is not of Asiatic descent. The Arctic was his original home, whence he moved southward in antiquity, over both North America and Asia, to inhabit both continents. In the light of these new records, the Arctic, long believed landless or almost so, contains the land of Nato'wa, warmed to a habitable climate by volcanic outlets or some uncharted warm ocean current, and the ancient home-land of the Indian. There the Red Man still dwells as hunter and warrior like those the first white men found in America. . . .

Proof of Lincoln Rand's discoveries will be adduced in the person of his son Kioga who is now in New York, and willing to tell what he knows. This man is literally the link which connects modern science with this remarkable discovery. . . .

Here the paper ends, obviously unfinished. The reason, as I later learned was that Kioga, the human link to which Munro referred, had dropped suddenly

from view. But as you shall learn, James Munro was not one who could leave such matters long under the shadow of uncertainty. After an unsuccessful search for his young friend, he moved swiftly, refitting his *Narwhal*. Fired by the *Cherokee's* epic record of discovery, forth then went the scientist in his modern *Narwhal*, eager to verify the existence of the new wilderness and its copper-skinned peoples, explore it, and if possible find his friend Kioga the Snow Hawk. . . .

Now, like Captain Scott, I too pondered on many things. What amazing facts lay behind the manifold physical changes in the *Narwhal*? Why had she been fitted and armed as if for siege, transformed into a ship of a century ago? What dangerous run had Munro contemplated in so equipping her? What perilous gantlet *had* she run, to be thus bristling with the discharged bolts of the enemy? Where were Munro and those who sailed with him?

Above all, the Snow Hawk, whose story this is—what befell him from the hour when he left civilization behind and turned back to Nato'wa, savage land of his birth?

These thoughts plagued me during our return to the States, where I sent the films found aboard the *Narwhal* to an expert in developing.

Safely back in the private museum which bears Munro's name, I carefully unwrapped the scientist's diary. Soon came answers, not regularly but completely none the less. I established a certain continuity of events from the time Kioga, known as the Snow Hawk, wrote farewell to his friend James Munro, and vanished in the very midst of civilization. And this is what I read or deduced from these records found aboard the schooner *Narwhal*:

CHAPTER II

A LINK TO THE PAST

ONCE in an eon you see such a man as Kioga, the product of generations of fine heredity, a man slowly developed by time. Two inches over six feet he stood, bearing a magnificent spread of shoulders with stately ease. He walked as tigers walk, with an easy loose-muscle swing, treading light as the well-trained athlete.

Such was the quiet personage who walked along an unpaved street, on

which hungry dogs skulked between rows of squalid and dreary shacks. To one hut, more pretentious than the others, clung a crude porch, hung with mattress and unwashed bedding. A black-haired little girl-child, thin and scrawny, played with an old rag-doll, and coughed harshly.

Down the street came an obese middle-aged woman, kerchief about head and many folds of colored cloth forming a voluminous dress. She bore muddy water in an unsanitary tin pail. Her skin was dark—indeed almost black. She disappeared inside a cabin.

Along the road hobbled an old man. He wore ragged overalls, shoes almost without soles, no hat. His hair hung about his neck. He walked stooped over and with effort. His face, too, was almost black.

Slouching on a corner, a sullen-faced youth of about sixteen proffered to the visitor a basket containing trinkets, of which he bought a few. The hands which delivered the purchase were covered with sores—impetigo.

ENOUGH, you will say. Why recall sordid ugly pictures of poverty-stricken China, India or whatever this is!

But this scene was none of these. The stranger walked in an American village—an American Indian settlement, gift of the generous white man to his red brother. Each day, for many days, Kioga had walked among these surviving red men. Each day he had witnessed this tragedy of a great race in slow decay. He had seen Indian children—child peons, shipped in gangs, toiling in the beet-fields beneath a blazing sun on hands and knees for sixty days—to earn fifteen cents a day. Some were tubercular, coughing as they grubbed in the earth—innocent victims of what Abraham Lincoln called an accursed system.

The aged woman who had entered the hut was cooking something at the stove when there came a knock at the door. A shadow fell athwart the earthen floor. The tall stranger stood in the doorway.

He spoke to her without sound, in sign-talk, that means of communication invented by the First Americans and understood almost universally by Indians, whose local languages differ.

"I am hungry, Mother."

The old woman muttered in her own tongue, and answered, in sign-talk: "I have only horse-meat. That is why my skin is black. Good 'nough for red man; not good for white man."

"I will eat horse-meat, Mother," answered the tall visitor.

"Then be welcome," came the gestured answer, with the instant hospitality of her Indian race. In silence the unbidden guest ate of the unpalatable meat, set before him on the earthen floor on a tawdry cracked plate. Of that muddy water he drank.

Finished, he did not at once rise, but looked down upon his wrinkled, stoic hostess, weaving a vision about her grizzled old head.

In the vision she was garbed in clean new buckskin skirt, beautified with dyed porcupine quills. Upon her gnarled feet were fresh-made moccasins of deer-skin, worked in geometrical designs. About her head there was a buckskin band, and from her neck a string of elks' teeth depended. She sat within a translucent skin tepee, one of a hundred clean skin lodges nestling against the breast of the verdant plain. Nourishing buffalo meat roasted before the fire and hung in plenty on the racks outside, curing in the sun. From the distance came the cries of the hunters, pursuing on swift ponies the wild buffalo. . . .

The child across the street coughed. The visitor rose, his vision broken.

In the sign-language he gave his thanks, and as quietly as he had come, departed.

That night to the old woman's cheerless lodge came a great gift: a freshly slaughtered steer. When she had called in her neighbors, and shared with them in the Indian manner, they asked:

"Where did you get all this fine meat?"

"A white man came. He was tall, strong, made like a warrior! He tasted the meat we eat. He must have sent the steer. May he see many winters!"

Everyone clapped hand to mouth in wonder. A miracle had happened: a white man had given something to an Indian! But the generous stranger was seen no more, though they talk of him to this day.

HOT midafternoon of a day in round-up time found the visitor in a western American grain-center. The streets were filled with cowboys, ranchmen and Indians. The steely ring of horses' hoofs mingled with the noise of automobile horns and the distant lowing of steers. Smells of wood-smoke hung on the air along with gasoline-fumes. Down near the round-up ground there was a touch

of olden times—clustering scores of Indian tepees, among which Indian women and children moved, dressed in gala attire for the gala event. All day there had been hard riding of fierce mustangs, the bulldogging of active sharp-horned steers; horse-races, parades and pageantry.

But that was over, and the excitement had died down somewhat. Fires sprang up, preparatory to the sunset meal, and magnified black shadows moved upon

catlike. An instant it hung in mid-air. A cry went up.

"Gangway! Hi! Hi! Maniac's loose!"

Destruction personified fell among the Indian gamblers. A single swing of that horn-armed head, and a bleeding brave hurtled full twenty feet, while another, gashed and torn, quivered beneath the pounding hoofs.



A scant twenty paces separated the steer and the innocents in its path when a stranger bounded at an angle across Maniac's charge.

the inner tepee walls. Somewhere a drum beat softly and was silent. An old chief sang half-forgotten snatches of a war-song. Horses whinnied near by and stamped the ground.

But most of the old Indians did not sing. They thought of the old days before the white man came, when buffalo fell to their swift arrows. They recalled swift dashes on bare horseback, with the wind talking in their ears—days when there was no check to the proud-spirited brave, when there was no reservation and all were free to roam, hunt, do battle. There was much discussion of a Texas-raised horse, Firebrand, an unbroken buckner whom no man had ridden; and of Maniac, the steer whose curving hooks had done murder this day, and who now dodged about the arena, pursued by two yelling daredevil cow-hands. At the rail a group of Indians laughed as they played a gambling game.

Amid boisterous laughter the two mounted range-men headed the steer between them, when of a sudden, pivoting on all fours, the enraged animal wheeled, charged for the rail and leaped

A moment's pause, with lashing tail, before the goaded steer swung its head, wicked red-shot eyes fixing upon a gaudy dash of color in its path. An Indian mother, wrapped in a blue and red blanket, stood there paralyzed with fear. A child, strapped to her back in a cradle-board, slept in blissful oblivion. All too quickly the snorting animal pounded toward the screaming woman.

Gripped first by the instinct to escape, the bystanders had leaped away in every direction. Now, stirred by the promptings of chivalry, they turned to offer aid. But their efforts had come late. A scant twenty paces separated the bellowing steer and the innocents in its path, when, as from nowhere, came a lightning interference.

One there was among the milling crowd to whom instant reaction had ever been the price of his survival: this dark-haired stranger bounded at an angle across Maniac's mad charge. There was a moment's hush, in which the clatter of the steer's split hoofs rose clear and distinct. In that instant men's hearts stood still, as the witnesses thought to see the

stranger hooked and tossed, a bloody corpse, into air.

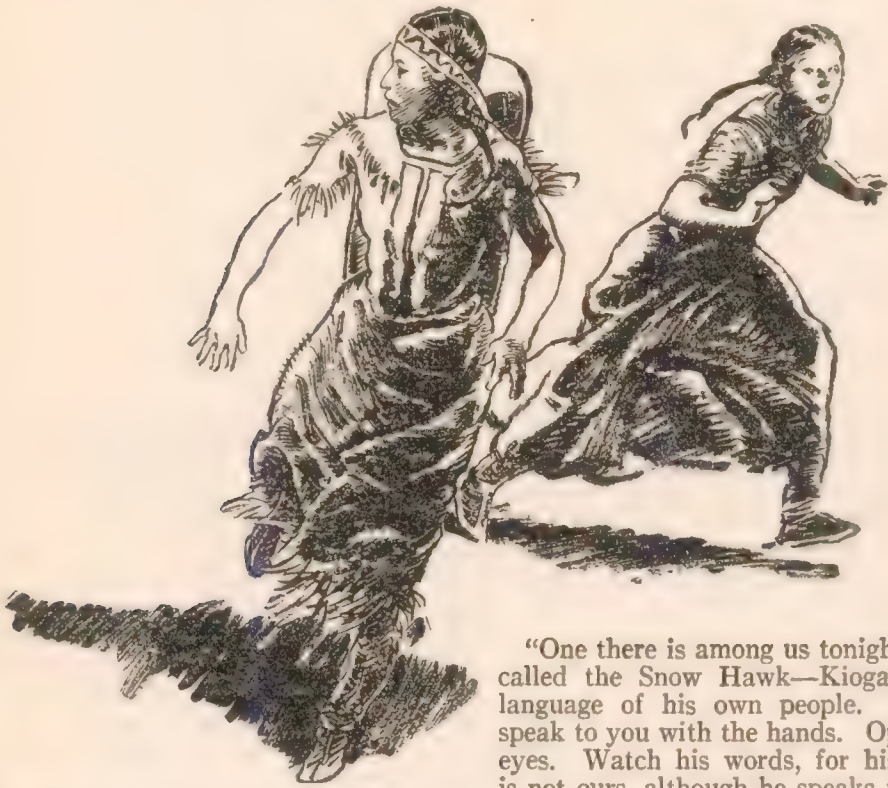
But straight at the sweating shoulders he leaped, clinging as the panther clings to the deer. One iron hand, passing beneath the drooling jaw, sought the killer's outer horn, gripped it and wrenched the head savagely round, bringing the animal crashing to its side in a cloud of dust, scarce five feet from the frightened squaw and child.

Twice did Maniac struggle, half rising. Each time its attacker threw the great animal flat, as if it were a yearling calf, holding it down until the ropes of the cow-hands, straining on head and

And Kioga the Snow Hawk, thinking of a day when twenty prime buffalo bulls had fallen beneath his sharp steel, could not but smile inwardly.

That night, at a place of honor in Big Shield's tent, the tall stranger sat. Though bronzed, this man was unmistakably a white; yet in some indefinable way he resembled these Indians. Mayhap this was due to the apparent fierceness of expression, relieved only by the finely chiseled lips, which now seemed somewhat softened.

Big Shield, resplendent in a buckskin shirt studded with elks' teeth, introduced the stranger thus:



hoof, held the steer at full stretch. Only then did the stranger rise, dust himself off and move back toward the obscurity whence he sprang.

But he who had laid low a thousand pounds of horn and bone was no match for the excited admiring throng which now surrounded him, shouting, cheering in their enthusiasm. Of these none were more vociferous than the Indians, who love a brave feat above all things, and him in particular whose daughter and grandson had been endangered by Maniac. Old Big Shield thumped him on the back and shook his hand.

"One there is among us tonight who is called the Snow Hawk—Kioga, in the language of his own people. He will speak to you with the hands. Open your eyes. Watch his words, for his tongue is not ours, although he speaks the English which some of you know not."

And in the language of the hands Kioga began to speak, in the graceful deliberate sign-talk, as "spoken" by a master. He gestured without haste. This is what he said:

"O my brothers! You ask me whence I come, and many other questions. Thus I answer: I have come a long way from my own land, which lies many marches in the north. We call it Nato'wa. We think it is the first land of the red man. For there he lives as of old. No law exists save that made by the red man, for the red man. Men never say: 'Do



Kioga the
Snow Hawk

not kill the buffalo. Do not kill the deer.' There is meat enough for all."

Some there were, at the beginning, who smiled incredulously. But there were others who grew tense as Kioga continued, and in whose eyes appeared the glitter of hope, and excitement. And before an hour was past, incredulity was forgotten in a deep fascination. For several hours the Snow Hawk spoke, almost without interruption; and in the telling he mentioned the name Mokuyi, of beloved memory.

AMONG those present was an old chief, Bull Calf by name, dignified as a Roman senator in his simple attire of plain war shirt and a feather hanging under one ear. Of them all Bull Calf was most stirred beneath his outer cloak of calm. His dark old eyes, still keen, searched the face of Kioga long and intently. He spoke with his hands.

"Him you speak of—Mokuyi," he said slowly. "Was he not learned in the white man's path? Did he not have many tongues to speak many Indian dialects? Did he not have a long scar—thus?" drawing a forefinger from shoulder to breast.

"Even so," answered Kioga, wondering at the old man's description. "It was Mokuyi who taught me to read and speak white man's language."

"Was he not as tall as I, with a small birthmark on left cheek-bone?" pursued the agitated old man.

"Wait," said Kioga, drawing from his pocket an envelope. It contained some of the photographs which had been developed from old negatives exposed in Nato'wa twenty-odd years earlier. He selected one, a portrait of a family group,

consisting of a broad-shouldered man and a beautiful young woman—his father and mother. Beside them, in civilized dress, stood Mokuyi as he had been then. Kioga handed the photograph over. Bull Calf studied it a moment.

Electrified, he leaped to his feet, waving the picture in air, all his Indian's stoicism falling away as he addressed the others.

"*Ai-yah!* Kioga speaks with honest hands! This is Mokuyi, my son. Stands beside him one we called Linnikun. *Ai-i*, I remember well." The chief's eyes held a far-away look. "They were like brothers, those two, always together. When Linnikun went away with his woman, Mokuyi said: 'Father, my friend goes away. Where he goes, I go.'" Bull-Calf's trembling hand fell upon Kioga's arm. "You son Linnikun?" he asked in broken English.

"I am his son," answered Snow Hawk.

Bull Calf's next question came as with great effort, scarce audible in the crowded tepee.

"Where is Mokuyi?"

"Mokuyi hunts with his ancestors," said Kioga quietly.

The old man stiffened, relaxed, sat suddenly down, staring long into the fire. No one spoke. At last he turned to Kioga, his cheeks wet.

"Tell me what happened to my son."

While his audience watched, in silence unbroken, Kioga began at the beginning, sketching briefly the history of the *Cherokee's* landing in Nato'wa, and telling them substantially what his father had recorded in the ship's log-book:

Almost immediately on landing they were attacked and captured by a band of savages and taken to a village called Hopeka. This, to their amazement, was thronged with red-skinned men whom, later, Rand came to believe were cousins of the American Indian.

Their land was called Nato'wa, or Sun's Land, a place of dark enchantment whose savage grandeur had not been gazed on by the eye of modern civilized man until Rand came. But with pencil and camera he corrected that, leaving behind him a record surpassing anything ever recorded by the first explorers of the New World.

Nato'wa is not another Greenland of today, bleak and cold, but an Arctic oasis, a northern Yosemite—such as Greenland doubtless was in distant eons, before cold and glaciation made it all but sterile. The mountains of Nato'wa

are robed in primeval forests and turbaned with everlasting snow. The land's stark geographic features have kept it a place apart all down the centuries. It is girt by fogs and eternal ice, hemmed in almost completely by impassable sea-combed reefs; warmed volcanically and by unknown mild ocean currents. No map pictures it. Its history had never been written, excepting what little appears in Rand's notes. . . .

In a night-raid by enemy tribesmen Rand and his wife were slain. But Mokuyi escaped to carry on the log-book record and adopt their little white son as his own. And in Mokuyi's handwriting it is told how Mokuyi himself had risen among his captors the Shoni tribe to high place.

Alone Mokuyi had sought to put down treachery by the Long Knife secret society. In dead of night the shaman Yellow Weasel, acting in behalf of all the society, murdered Mokuyi and his native wife Awena, and deliberately implicated the child Kioga in the deed. Two days later with his own knife Kioga slew the shaman beneath the yellow waters of the river, in the presence of twenty of the shaman's braves.

Thereafter Kioga was exiled, hunted down by the medicine-man's henchmen like a wounded beast, until beast he became, turning, rending and tearing his foes whenever he came upon them—and that was often. In the end he kept his vow of vengeance, sworn beside the smoking bier of his loved ones. Man by man he killed many of Yellow Weasel's secret society, until the name and fame of Kioga the Snow Hawk spread far and wide among the Shoni.

THIS Kioga told the attentive Indians about the lodge-fire. And he told how the fame of his outlaw years had grown, how he broke the power of the Long Knives single-handed, how his prestige thus grew, resulting in nomination to the war-chieftainship, which honor he accepted, leading his tribes to victory against their hereditary foes, the ever-raiding plains Wa-Kanek.

And having told these things exactly as they happened, without false modesty, he was about to conclude, when there was an unexpected interruption. The Snow Hawk had just completed a particularly exciting account of an Indian raid, with its attendant trophy-taking. Suddenly one of the younger braves let out a cry of surprise.

A thin little boy of ten, overcome by excitement, had absent-mindedly seized the man by the hair, as if to take his scalp. Much confused by his sudden entry into the limelight, he now sat crest-fallen and embarrassed amid the laughter of his elders, then sought to escape the public eye by hiding behind his laughing victim, before dashing from the tent in confusion.

"Who was he?" asked Kioga of Bull Calf.

"Tokala the Fox," answered the old chief. "Nephew of Smiling Woman. He is sick. He will not live long. We never punish him."

Interrupted by this event, the meeting came to an end, postponed until the morrow. When Kioga would have bidden the Indians farewell, it was Bull Calf who insisted that he remain the night. After some hesitation he consented.

And so it was that while James Munro searched for Kioga in the great seaboard city of New York, Kioga slept in the tepee of Bull Calf, far to the westward.

BUT the words of the Snow Hawk had penetrated deep into the minds of his hearers. News of his talk spread among the lodges. And next day, to the lodge of Bull Calf came several visitors for Kioga. First was Two Coups, whom the Snow Hawk made welcome with the deference due to great age. His woman Sits-in-Sun was with him. The pipe was lit and passed around. Then Two Coups addressed Kioga.

"I have watched the hands of Kioga," said the old man. "Eighty summers have grayed my head. It is long since those days. But I have not forgotten the buffalo. With these hands I killed many when I was young. I will go back to Nato'wa with you, to kill another bull before I am wrapped in my blanket."

Startled, Kioga gave no sign. Refusal was on his lips, but the sight of that ancient face seamed with countless wrinkles and marked with a strange deep longing struck him with pity. He laid down the pipe.

"It is good. Together we will go."

Sits-in-Sun, who had sat beside Two Coups in silence, came back from some far place of memory.

"Ai-i-ha!" she cackled suddenly, turning to Two Coups. "I remember when you killed the Crow brave who was stealing your horses. A white man's village sits on that place now. Those were good days." Her eyes, black as shoe-

buttons and all but lost in wrinkles, snapped as she turned to Kioga. "I have not forgotten how to tan a skin. My fingers have remained cunning with the needle. I can make moccasins—see this pair I have brought you, my son. No white man's beads, no white-man's thread, but quills of the porcupine, thread of sinew, the skin of a deer. I will go along also, and bring my needle."

Expressionless was the face of Kioga, as his downcast eyes examined the old woman's gift, poor pitiful product of hands that never more would possess aught of their youthful skill. Silently the old crone waited on his answer. Finally:

"My heart stretches," said the Snow Hawk softly. "There will be a place for Sits-in-Sun."

"Eh," exclaimed the old woman delightedly. "Then I shall see my man strike the enemy yet once more before I cross the slippery log."

AS the hours passed, many other visitors came to talk with Kioga. First a delegation of several young men, in company with their elders. Of these, Kills-Bear, of warrior's age, spoke in good English.

"I went to white man's schools and college. I studied law. But I cannot practice—because my skin is red, the clients do not come. Therefore I am a laborer. I dig ditches, swing a pick. Dollar a day. I too wish to go to Nato'wa."

Eats-Running, of middle years, rose.

"My race dies of white man's disease. I do not wish to die thus. I would go with Kioga."

Bets-His-Shirt, an old man, then spoke laconically:

"Buffalo gone. Hunting-ground gone. Children all dead, only I am left of a family of eleven. What the hell! I will go."

A woman, White Calf, spoke softly:

"My children—three of them—sickened in the white man's school far away, and came home to die. I will cook and bear heavy burdens. Let me go."

Many more spoke, one by one.

"We are sick of eating horse-meat. Better to die than live like dogs forever. We will go. . . . We were rich. Oil on our reservation. White men cheated. Pigs are better fed than we. Let us come. . . . I cannot live long, anyway. My time is almost up. I would go."

And of all who came, wishing to make the journey, none was refused save one.

A boy of ten, thin and stoop-shouldered, sidled up to the Snow Hawk. It was he of the volatile spirit, who had disrupted the meeting of the night before. He spoke in a whisper.

"I wish to go to Nato'wa, please," quoth Tokala. "I wish to rise high in Shoni councils. I hate school. I hate the whites. They were cruel to my people. They make us wound Earth Mother with the plows. They made me cut my long hair." Supplication filled the child's trembling voice. "Please—please let me go too."

"Little warrior," said the Snow Hawk gently, placing a hand upon the slim shoulders of Tokala, "it may not be. The journey will be long and far. The Great White Father would not approve." There was finality in the words, at which the boy wilted perceptibly. Kioga knew a pang of sympathy. To soften the refusal, he slipped something into Tokala's hand. It was a small knife, in a leather sheath. At another time the boy's eyes would have glistened. But though he clasped the gift tightly as he left the lodge, there was misery in his heart, and in his thoughts. He bit his fist till the blood came. Great tears hung in his dark eyes and splashed on his hand. But Tokala did not give way: he was an Indian.

Back in the lodge, before the councilors, Smiling Woman pled for Tokala.

"You saw how his ribs stick out. He has the white man's cough. The doctors say he will die. Let him come with us!"

"He is but a child," answered one of the chiefs inflexibly. "The march would surely kill him."

Smiling Woman turned to Kioga. The Snow Hawk said nothing. Little had he thought, two days since, to be burdened on his return with a band of Indians, some of them old and almost feeble. He had consented to their company out of a desire to lighten their hardships. But it would be no journey for a child. His silence confirmed the chiefs. Smiling Woman went away, saying no more.

SO it came about that strange activity animated the neighborhood which was once the hunting-ground of these Indians. One by one articles for the trip were assembled. The tent-poles were taken down, the canvas folded. *Parfleche* bags and leather boxes long unused made their appearance, filled with personal possessions long treasured.

There were painted shields, bows, ar-

rows and quivers, brittle with age. Old spears tipped with flint or iron came forth, along with war-hammers and tomahawks, rusty and broken. Conspicuous among the other items were trusted objects of veneration, valued for their potency as "strong medicine." Many of the old chiefs had these, and even Smiling Woman had a large square box, of which she said:

"It belonged to my brother. It was very *wakan* to him. I promised never to leave it behind. It is heavy, but it is sacred."

Such objects were very carefully handled, and their contents considered inviolate, for every Indian respects the "medicine" bundle of his fellows.

Some few there were who produced old rifles, even heavy buffalo-guns, rusted and pitted, relics of another day, when the Indian power was being broken by the advance of white civilization.

ONE old chief fell ill, and lay dying in his lodge. But he sent a benediction and the welcome gift of a dozen horses, with all their Indian equipment. Not many hours later, well-mounted and eager to be away, a strange cavalcade melted into the gloom of a starless night, and passed into the hills on the first stage of a long journey.

Thus the silent cavalcade began its long northward trek, as from time beyond recall, oppressed peoples have emigrated in search of better worlds in which to dwell. The Jew returned to Palestine; the negro went back to his native Africa; the Pilgrim fled oppression and sought freedom in the New World of America—and then oppressed the people he found there.

Greater movements have begun on this earth than the Snow Hawk's little caravan, but none went forth more inspired. With eyes facing toward mysterious Nato'wa, these Indians sought their particular promised land—land of that liberty denied them by white civilization.

All changed now was Kioga's original plan to embark on a ship bound for Alaska, whence he had had vague ideas of proceeding farther north by crossing ice and sea by whatever means seemed likeliest to bring him home to Nato'wa.

For such an itinerary he had ample money on his person. But he had not enough to pay the passage of his entire present band. Even possessing enough, he could not have equipped a ship for Arctic sailing in a week. Moreover, in

ships he had no great confidence. He recalled what the ice had done to the yacht *Alberta* and others of which he had read—many of them sunken wrecks today, though designed to survive in the Arctic.

These obstacles were now temporarily overcome by their use of the gift-horses to bear them on the first part of their journey. But his thoughts turned again and again to the future. A ship was not required—as yet. Better go over the polar ice than attempt to break through it. But arrived at the warm currents which give Nato'wa its maritime climate, they would need some kind of craft in which to navigate open water and later the dread reefs surrounding that little known land. Of what materials could this craft be made? This was a major and vital concern.

He thought of the driftwood whereof the Eskimo fashions frames for his skin boats; of whale-bone, which can be used in case of need for ribbing and thwarts. He thought, too, of all those water-logged hulks, which float about a certain ship's graveyard in the unknown north, near Nato'wa. Of them all, assuredly some materials could be found of which to create, on the spot, the craft they would need. So he worried no more about materials, but applied himself to design, sketching out mentally the plans for his proposed craft, and calculating how in the past he had constructed his many own canoes.

CHAPTER III

A STRANGE CAVALCADE

THUS for several days the band maintained a steady northward pace, resting frequently on the hilly plain and throwing up a circle of tents by night, then away again before the dawn.

With the rail-heads of civilization in the south, sunrise of a day that dawned red and sharp with early morning chill, found a strange metamorphosis worked upon the mounted party—a change which rolled back the scroll of time two hundred years, to a day when the wild red men roved the grassy plains, and like the prairie wolves, roamed in the wake of the long-vanished buffalo-herds.

Gone were the rude cast-offs, the white-man's clothing. In its place had returned the picturesque raiment of the Indian. As the sun rose higher, the scouts rode naked to the waist. The



ancient rifles had been brought forth, and were carried athwart the saddles, which rested upon woolen fringe-hung blankets striped with designs in red, black and orange. The white-man's pack and diamond hitch were abandoned. In their place the Indian travois returned—two poles fastened at the horses' shoulders and dragged aground behind, with a woven net across, in which were carried *parfleche* bags, boxes, and tents. Upon the travois-horses rode the women in old buckskin garb brought along for the purpose, fringed and embroidered with bead-work. At their belts were their thin skinning-knives. Many bore proudly atop their saddle-horns the shields of their lords, who rode near by—some wearing war-shirts ablaze across the back with stained quill-work, and carrying *coup*-sticks adorned with feathers tipped with weasel-tails.

Thus, like their ancestors of the dead centuries, a band of Indians moved northward, armed as for battle—such a band as must have sworn allegiance to Sitting Bull in the sunset of his power. The old men chanted war-songs and cavorted like youths on their eager mounts;

and the young men listened, expanding to a new life; and the women chattered continually. For this was a proud and happy day!

Well on their journey's way, the caravan paused one night in a sheltered hollow far beyond the last large outposts of civilization—so far, indeed, that forage for the horses had become a serious concern. Over the fires this night the band was deciding upon its future itinerary.

Of a sudden Smiling Woman came running into camp, pale and frightened. Before she could give voice to her fears, one of the horseherds came galloping behind, leading two animals. He hung low over the neck of his horse, and slipped fainting from its back, ghastly and bloodless of face. Kioga was at his side in an instant, to catch him before he fell to the ground.

"Black Kettle! You bleed!" ejaculated Two Coup suddenly.

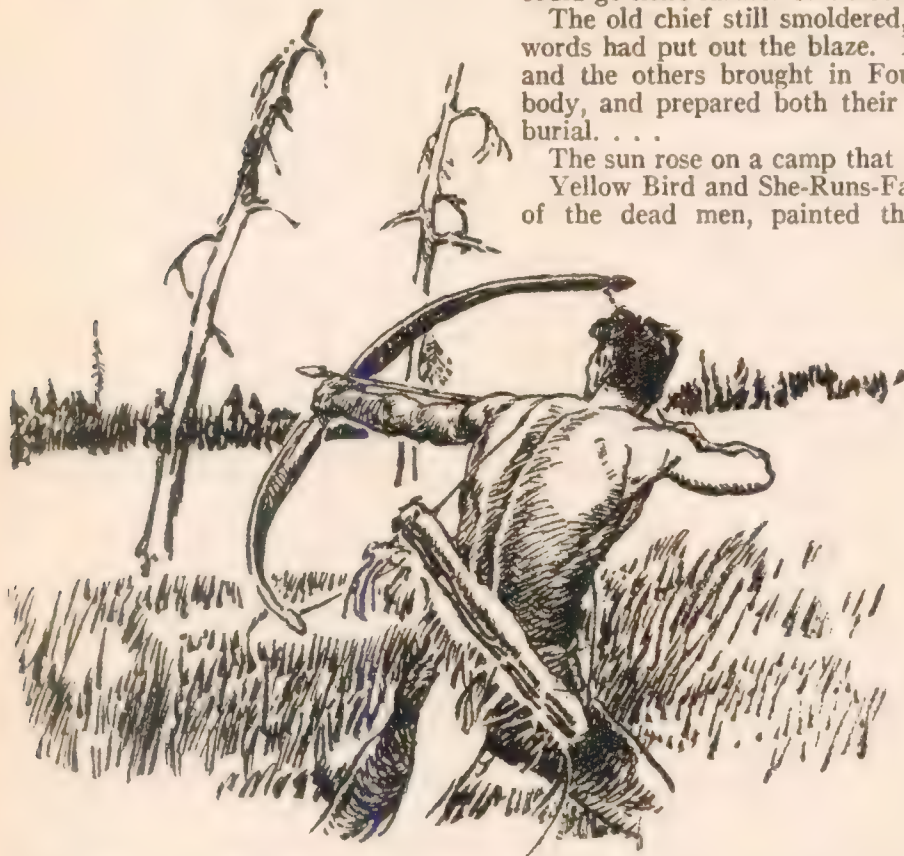
"Yes!" answered the injured man heavily. "We sought pasture for the horses. Two Tongue knocked me from my horse, and did this thing!"—indicating an ugly bleeding gash in the neck. "He has turned back, stolen the other

The moose is one of the few animals who gives battle to the hunter. . . . Wheeling now, the bull turned on its tormentor.

It is not far east where the north-running rivers lie. We will march there in two days. We will take the boat. We could go little farther on horse anyway."

The old chief still smoldered, but soft words had put out the blaze. Bull Calf and the others brought in Four Bear's body, and prepared both their dead for burial. . . .

The sun rose on a camp that mourned. Yellow Bird and She-Runs-Fast, wives of the dead men, painted their faces



horses—all of them but these. Four Bear lies also dead, tomahawked from behind." The wounded man coughed thickly. "Ai-i-i, I think I am going away. Bury me where the sun will strike my face. I shall never see Na-to'wa."

While the others ranged about, Kioga dropped to one knee, supporting Black Kettle's head on his forearm.

"You shall not die, warrior—" he began—to be interrupted by the faint voice of the Indian.

"Our ancestors killed horses—over dead man's grave. Do not do this—when I die. Take my good roan. Treat him well. You will need good horses. I—"

"Yes, brother?" prompted Kioga gently. Then he stopped, felt of the man's breast, gently lowered the head. He had seen death too often not to know it now.

Wild with fury at the horsethief, Bull-Calf shook his fist in air. "We will follow on our three horses. We will overtake him and cut his throat. We—"

Kioga raised an admonishing hand.

"Hear me, elder brother: Let him go.

black with fat and charcoal, and cut their long hair. On their blankets the Indians laid the dead. Upon their faces they painted the marks of tribe and clan, that the spirits, soon to depart, would be recognized by the souls that awaited them in the Hereafter.

Then they sang unto their dead in eulogy, and bade them farewell. On a high scaffold built of drag-poles which the thief had left behind, they laid the bodies beside their weapons.

TWO days later, Captain Mitchell, skipper of the river-steamer *Athabaska*, rubbed his eyes at a picturesque sight confronting him on one bank, where a band of Indians waited, as if fresh from the past of a century ago.

If Captain Mitchell hesitated to accommodate the motley band, in Kioga the Indian migrants had an able spokesman. Persuaded by this tall fine-looking leader who spoke perfect cultured English, Mitchell weakened. And he gave way entirely when Snow Hawk offered to pay for the passage of all with Ameri-

can funds. With all aboard, the *Athabaska* steamed on.

Canoes, lumber and sledges lay piled on the steamer's deck. Chained to the boards were numerous husky dogs, mingling their howls with the lowing of a few northbound cattle. From aft came the whinny of a band of woodcutters' horses. A strangely mixed company of Indian half-breeds, miners, trappers and fur-traders strode the decks. A black-robed priest moved about silently.

Presently, strolling about the deck, Kioga came upon an excited circle of miners, trappers and woodsmen. Within the circle a huge bear of a man was engaged in pinning an opponent's shoulders to the boards. After his victory, the Snow Hawk observed the passing-over of certain objects to the victor—a process whereby the giant had already acquired considerable wealth.

A typical brawler was the winner. Gigantic in stature, overbearing in manner and with the strength of three average men, he was a formidable antagonist, and not a little drunk. He was tolerated by captain and crew for his titanic labors at the woodpile, whenever the steamer paused to fuel up. And as usual, he was boasting.

"*Je suis* B'tees Belleau, stronges' man on this *rivière*. I have kill' grizzle-b'ar wit t'e naked hand. *Pardieu*, but I am strong fella! All this I have win." His broad self-satisfied gesture included dogs and harness, skins and traps, on which the gaze of the losers dwelt moodily. To some this meant a year's labor lost, to others loss of income for the coming year; for without traps furs cannot be easily caught. None of this was lost upon the watchful Kioga.

THE boaster's exultant glance fell at last upon him who sat with swinging foot upon a large crate. The pride-inflated Belleau did not like the cold indifferent gaze of the other. And as he was convincing himself of this fact, Kioga, weary unto boredom of the man's incessant vaunting, arose and prepared to go forward in search of a modicum of peace and quiet.

Perchance something of his detestation of the other had been discernible. Certainly the Snow Hawk was not one to veil his feelings in awe of any man. Howbeit, he had not gone two steps when in arrogant tones the great Belleau challenged him loudly.

"*Vous, là!* You sneer at B'tees?"

Slowly the Snow Hawk swung round, meeting Belleau's furious gaze coolly.

Quick and straight the answer came, thrown directly into Belleau's teeth.

"And if I laugh, what then?"

Because Belleau was the true bully, he stood open-mouthed before this direct reply. Then, not daring to allow another to front him down, he recovered, glaring upon Kioga. And now, reading him as through a transparent piece of glass, Kioga could not conceal a little smile.

"M'sieur," began Belleau ominously, "I am B'tees Belleau. It is not safe to laugh in my face. I have kill' a man for less. But you—ah, *je vous pardonnerai* if—" Here Belleau's cunning eye moved to the belongings of Kioga's companions.

"We will gamble, you and B'tees—*non?*"

A moment Kioga stood thoughtful. He did not wish to become involved in any unpleasantness which would delay his party; but suddenly, on the echo of a dog's barking, another thought entered his mind. To Belleau he made answer all innocently:

"Gamble? For what, Belleau? Our horses and gear against your dogs and these things you've won?"

GLEEFULLY Belleau rubbed his ham-like hands together. This was to be easier than he had expected. "*Oui, bien, oui!*" he agreed eagerly. "Whoever lift the mos' heavy weight, she is win—*non?*"

"You're right—no!" interrupted a bearded miner whose pistol and holster alone remained to him. "Look-a-here, Belleau. Keep this square an' above-board. It's his specialty—lifting," he added, turning to Kioga. "You can't beat him at his own game."

Belleau bristled indignantly. "I have the honor, m'sieur. I am play fair the game. *Mais* the American may refuse."

Kioga acknowledged the miner's interference with a nod, but he did not refuse. "Will you hold the stakes?" he asked of the miner.

"Shore enough," was the instant reply; "but you might's well hand it all over to him on a silver platter."

The grumbling miner separated the stakes: Belleau's dogs, gear and winnings of the day on the one hand, and on the other Kioga's horses, and most of the band's trappings.

Upon these preparations the Indian migrants looked with keen anxiety. Though they had seen the Snow Hawk manhandle a steer, this Belleau seemed

inhumanly strong. As for the crew and passengers, these were all anticipation. The American could not win, but it was refreshing to see Belleau bearded, for once in his life!

A LIFTING platform was improvised, a crude affair consisting of two sections of thick log upon which to place either foot. The platform itself was the gangplank, girdled with strong rope so arranged as to be raised by a single central strand, having a great knot at its end. Upon the platform were placed two iron drums of gasoline. Between these was set a huge box containing machine parts and other heavy objects. Finally Belleau called a halt, and threw off his shirt.

Clambering up to a position straddling the weights, he seized the knotted rope in both hands and tried his strength. The weight would not move. One box was taken off, and Belleau tried again. With an effort that brought sweat to his brow he succeeded in raising one end of the platform. The wager called for a clearance all around sufficient to roll a six-inch log beneath.

Dripping with sweat, Belleau strained, tugged and struggled; yet he had to order the removal of another box before he could complete the lift. The log rolled beneath. Baptiste's grip slipped. The ship quivered as the weights struck the deck. But Belleau's confidence was unabated, for never had man in all Canada raised such a weight as that. Grinning triumphantly, he turned to Kioga.

"Your turn, m'sieur," he sneered.

Forth stepped the Snow Hawk, shirtless, a moment to estimate the weight on the platform. Beside the bearish Belleau, he looked almost slender. But among the onlookers, experienced in gauging a man's powers, there were eyes hard to deceive. Eyes that took in the depth of chest and the extraordinary thickness of the lower-back muscles—twin indices of a man's strength. "By God, there's a man!" muttered some one softly.

Now to the astonishment of the beholders Kioga threw back the boxes Belleau had removed. Baptiste's dismay was only momentary. Then he laughed, jeeringly. It is one thing to load a platform; it is another to make a lift.

Lightly the Snow Hawk sprang upon the wooden supports. Bending, he laid hold of the rope below the knot. Putting strain upon it gently, he centered the

combined strength of loins, thighs and back, with a gentle ripple of muscles tensing under the taut skin. Again Baptiste laughed, long and loud.

But the laughter died in his throat. For in that instant the platform cleared the boards, rising swiftly in a single movement. He whose duty it was to roll the log beneath stood in amazement, forgetful until reminded of his task. Swiftly he rolled the log beneath with space to spare. Not until then did Kioga lower his load gently to the deck, and step down amid a spontaneous cheer—from all save the great Baptiste, who sweated even more profusely now than after his earlier exertions.

After his own effort, Kioga showed no more than the natural flush of color coursing through the muscle-groups involved. But Belleau's face burned scarlet, as he mingled profanity with his protests.

"*Sacré enfant de garce!* I have-a been cheat!" he roared.

Whereupon the bearded miner silenced him.

"Then git up thar an' lift ag'in! Aint nobody stoppin' ye, is they?"

So again Belleau climbed up and heaved and groaned and strained, but the result was a foregone conclusion. He was overmatched, fairly beaten at his own game—and none knew it better than Baptiste Belleau.

So came Kioga into possession of fifteen big northern dogs, in good condition, together with their harness, as well as all the other gear Belleau had gained from those against whom he had wrestled. These latter Kioga returned to their respective owners, traps and all.

And the ship was troubled no more by Belleau, who slunk ashore at the first opportunity.

WITH the steamer making good headway, it seemed that the migrants were at last well on their way to the Arctic and destined to gain it without further mishap. But during one night came a terrific explosion from amidships. The steamer quivered no longer to the spin of her paddle-wheel as she settled heavily upon a sand-bar in midstream.

Serious damage was done to the boiler, it seemed. Two weeks or a month might pass before repairs could be effected. Kioga learned with regret. They dared not wait, indeed and he settled the matter by arranging with the captain for purchase of four large canoes, into which



the band loaded its possessions, a supply of food, its dogs and equipment.

Then, amid the hearty farewells of other passengers, Kioga and his strange party were away, this time in one of the world's most ancient means of transport, bark batteaux such as Alexander MacKenzie used when first he broke the trail they were now following toward the Arctic.

Beyond view of the steamer, it was not long before the band shed their clothing to paddle again naked to the waist in the heat of midday sun. But this was feasible only where the going was swift. Elsewhere, and at every pause, they were greeted by eddying swarms of ravenous northern mosquitoes, whose blood-hungry millions were omnipresent in camp or at portage. Smudge fires nor brushing kept the mosquitoes away; but plastered with clay and in motion upon the river, the band was comparatively free from attack.

Several days passed thus without notable incident, save that their progress was swifter than at any other time in their journey. Then one day they encountered a stretch of fast water, the only alternative to which was a long laborious portage—with the mosquito hordes ready and waiting.

To Kioga, accustomed to run the foaming roaring streams of Nato'wa, the

face of this rapid was as an open page, with no dangerous exposed rocks. The run was made in safety by three of the craft, and the fourth was passing safely through. Kioga's canoe brought up the rear and mishap occurred to it, because of the stern man's ignorance of watercraft.

From his crouch in the bow Kioga had permitted his bark to head almost straight upon an upthrusting rock that split the current ahead. Long experience on treacherous waters had taught him that if he but kept his canoe straight, one half of the current would bear it safely round the rock.

Mistaking Kioga's deliberate act for carelessness, the stern man dug his paddle deep, attempting to steer the craft out of the fancied danger. One half of the current thus caught the bow to the left, while the stern, responding to the after paddle, was seized by the other half of the current. In an instant the canoe swung broadside, was carried full upon the rock, ripped, smashed and broken in two, precipitating its occupants into the water.

Perceiving that both of his companions were able to attain the shore, Kioga salvaged such floating objects as came within his reach. The canoe itself rushed on its way, a total wreck. The canoe could be replaced. But the loss of one



Kioga was absorbed in searching out a safe passage among the under-water rocks when the trapper erupted suddenly into action.

part of her cargo was a serious matter. Somewhere near the fatal rock, scattered beyond recall along the bottom, lay their ammunition. Such guns as they had were now practically useless.

Luckily each man fortunate enough to possess an old rifle, still carried a few cartridges with him. With these, as time passed, they shot some migrating ducks, but little more.

Now daily their supply of food was being reduced by the inroads of many mouths, human and canine, for the dogs too had to be fed. They took trout and whitefish and *inconnu*, and with these they fed the dogs, but Kioga and his band caught nowhere near enough on their poor hooks and makeshift lines.

That night, at the campfire, Kioga addressed his men.

"We have come many miles. Let us sleep well, and on the morrow hunt. Before sunrise the hunters will seek what may be found along the river woodland. Those remaining will fish in the stream."

Grunts of approval came from every side, as the remainder of the band awaited Kioga's selection of those who were to hunt.

"It is true we have little ammunition," he told them quietly. "But we have several bows and many arrows. The bows are old and the arrows warped. We cannot make the bows younger, but

the arrows will straighten, and we can make more. We are forest men. These are our weapons. We will not fail, if we be cunning hunters."

"Strong words," laughed old Bull-calf, in delight at the prospect of an old-fashioned hunt. "There is a saying among my people: 'Any bow to a good hunter.' Tomorrow red meat will fall to the arrows which our ancestors made. And now let us sleep."

But to Kioga had come the thought that it was too much to expect these warriors to kill, when both weapons and skill were dull. Of his own skill he had no doubt. It was but a year ago, more or less, since he had put down his strong hunting bow.

A STIFF breeze blew, giving them surcease from the torturing mosquitoes. It was very still. In the south an immense orange moon rose slowly. It was the prowling hour, and the Snow Hawk was also restless. He rose in the quiet of the night and tried several of the warped bows. One broke at a pull of the cord. Another cracked, and he laid it aside. Of them all he selected one of horn and sinew, reinforced it and tried his aim by shooting at a tree-trunk near by. The shaft wandered in flight, but struck true enough. Selecting a handful of the straightest shafts, he would have re-

turned to his place beside the fire, but his pulse was beating swifter. The touch of that primitive weapon had awakened an instinct even more primitive, and he stepped silently beyond the fire's light, where in a moment his eyes expanded to the gloom. Forward he moved to the river, and pushed off alone in a canoe. A moment he bent, cupping water not to his lips, but to that keen nose of his, upon which he had learned to rely from boyhood to lead him to meat. He snuffed but a little. The moist nostril perceives what the dry overpasses.

Then, keeping to the stream, he pushed along its surface for several miles. At a wooded bank he tied the canoe and stepped ashore. A twig snapped softly under his foot. A little impatiently he paused to remove his moccasins, wondering if his skill in the stalk had suffered during his stay in civilization. The faintest scratch next reached his ears. No other human ear could have detected it. But Kioga had the ears of an owl. A twig had rasped against fringed coat or leggin. He removed both; and almost naked he slipped along now, silent as any other prowler of the night.

One by one he ignored the telltale taint of others who moved within the dark around him. With discriminating nostrils he sought the scent of the greater deer, perhaps even a caribou if luck proved good.

SUDDENLY a wisp of scent came, then was gone. Rigid as a hound at point for but that instant, in another moment the Snow Hawk was in full stride, traveling fast upon a thread of scent, which in the unraveling would lead to meat. And soon upon an expanse of moonlit mud he saw a long oval unmistakable spoor—the trail of a moose, of all deer the most magnificent, cunning and formidable, a prey worthy his subtlest skill.

One quick glance told him the quarry had an hour's lead, that it bled a little, from wounds inflicted perhaps in battle with some vanquished wolf. And as he went, great slashes showed in the moist earth, stamped there in rage or pain.

Swift before, his speed was multiplied now, for he raced as he learned to do in his crippled boyhood. Here swinging rapidly hand-over-hand, borrowing of every springy limb its resiliency in propelling him forward. A sudden check, drawn and tense, as the Snow Hawk listened, looked and savored the air into which he moved. Then a lightning freeze

to rigidity, as across the clearing the quarry moved in full view!

BELLY deep in tall lush grasses, an indigo etching rose against the red-umber sky of early dawn. There the stately quarry passed in ghostly silence—yet not more silent than the Snow Hawk followed.

Beast of the marsh, uncouth, unearthly in dimensions, its vast shovel-like antlers spreading six feet across, hanging with marsh-plants, and swaying amid the vapor-columns blown from its wet nostrils; from its shaggy rich-brown sides the muddy swamp-waters adrip; from its neck, below the ugly muzzle, the strange bell-like dewlap grotesquely pendant and swinging. It was Muswa to Kioga—not the ponderous Muswa he had hunted in his own land, but a giant as giants go on the continent of North America.

Quick to the string he fitted an iron-headed arrow. Swift to his jaw he drew, and loosed the goose-winged bolt away. Straight in short trajectory it flew; and as the deer dropped its head beneath the water in search of the succulent marsh-plants it loved, the arrow grazed the horny crest.

The mighty armament threshed erect. With bulging eyes and heaving flank the startled moose turned broadside to the silent hunter. Again the humming of the bow-cord. As by magic, the moose bore in its side the feathers of an arrow. Another leaped and sped true, and yet another still, before it could leap aside. Five giant bounds the beast then took, before espying Kioga in the act of nocking a fifth arrow.

Of a moose this much is known: He is one of those few who stands and gives battle to the human hunter. Wheeling now, implacable of mien, grunting savagely and with the whites of its eyes showing, the bull turned on its tormentor.

In that instant the quick eye of Kioga glimpsed the old scars of wolf-fangs on the animal's brisket. There were white hairs on the grotesque muzzle, attesting age and cunning. And there was fury in the blazing eyes as the bull charged. But ready and waiting stood Kioga, until the glittering frost in each spade-like horn showed gemlike and gleaming.

Then, like the flicker of heat-lightning, he leaped aside. Close past his flank the left antler flailed; then the moose wheeled to lash out with the dead-

ly fore-hoofs. But the man-figure had leaped upward, as in the flying mount, and was locked to the shaggy shoulders, high up behind the beating tines of the antlers—and striking swiftly with his knife.

A moment Muswa shuddered, quivering with pain and fear. Twenty incredible bounds he took. Then he collapsed beneath the hunter.

It was not the first such wild ride Kioga had survived. Upon such a beast as this he had first dropped from above, to learn his strength and taste the primeval thrill which comes when the quarry sinks beneath the body-weight pounce of the ambushing hunter. Now again his blood ran swift and hot with the ardor of the kill.

But in a moment he turned to practical business. With deft strokes he divided the great carcass and bore head and all four quarters to the river. Returning he retraced his steps to the canoe, in which he picked up the moose, and turned back to camp.

Smiling Woman was first to note his return. The immense weight of the moose sank the craft almost to its gunwales. Above its prow the immense head was raised, the antlers spreading out to either side. The effect was as of some strange amphibian creature, swimming out of the distance. And astern, covered with blood, Kioga knelt upon his clothes and slowly worked his craft ashore, the orange fire of the rising sun at his back.

Such a shout arose as only leaves the throats of hungry men. The cooking fires were quickly kindled. With sharp blades the women cut up the meat, impaled it upon peeled twigs and set it to cook before the coals. Soon rose the rich aroma of roasting moose-loin to thrill the senses of men long starved for the diet of their hunter-ancestors.

CHAPTER IV

SMILING WOMAN'S MEDICINE

THE days passed; the miles reeled off behind; and the dense forest along the river gave way to the sparser growth of the higher latitudes.

In the Indian camp one night old Sits-in-Sun had been turning strips of meat to dry over the smoking fire. She went away for a few moments, and returning, clapped one hand to her mouth.

"Sits-in-Sun is afraid. What is it?" asked Kioga gently.

"I turned meat here a moment ago. Now—a piece is gone!"

"Thieving jays swooped down to steal, mother."

"No," replied the aged woman, casting affrighted glances about. "There is a hungry mouth among us who have meat."

Soothingly the Snow Hawk reassured the old woman. But she shook her hoary head. "I am old: I know—we have offended a spirit. Tonight I will make an offering to charm it away."

True to her word, Sits-in-Sun that night gave of her best dried meat, placing it just outside the illumination of the camp-fire on a stone. Sometime between the still small hours and dawn the offering vanished. No trail led into or out of the camp, as the suspicious warriors quickly ascertained. Impatient at the delay occasioned by this incident, Kioga at last remonstrated with his band.

"There are thieves of the air and thieves of the earth. A wolverine, or mayhap a fox, has stolen the offering. Let us waste no more time on this, but break camp and take to our canoes. The sun rises high. The journey is far. If an evil spirit follows, it will become lost on the rivers."

"You cannot lose a spirit thus," muttered old Sits-in-Sun. "Spirits can walk on water, fly in air and pass through holes smaller than the eye of a needle. *Ai-i*, this is a bad omen."

No further untoward events occurred during the day, however. And at nightfall, drawing their canoes upon a sand bar, the band kindled its fires, eating again of the diminishing moose-meat.

NEAR the end of the meal Kioga was first to glimpse the approach of a deep-laden canoe bearing a single occupant, who sat startled, with uplifted paddle, staring at the warlike band. As they returned his wave, he appeared to regain his composure. His paddle dipped and the canoe touched the pebbly beach.

The newcomer was a swarthy, square-faced man, wearing a weathered mackinaw coat. His heavy woolen trousers were tucked into high hob-nailed boots, from one of which a knife-handle protruded. He had not shaved nor combed for many a week.

Accosted by Kioga, he shook hands, introducing himself simply as John Smith, trapper and prospector, with a glance that discouraged further questioning. He carried his rifle constantly under one arm. His quick black eyes

leaped curiously from face to face among the Indians, and dwelt overlong on the young girl Pretty Eagle, who sewed on a skin amid the older women.

Then he sat down unbidden with his hosts, took up a chunk of meat in one hand and ate greedily, wiping his greasy fingers on his coat, already amply soiled by previous wipings.

"Goin' north?" he asked at last.

Kioga nodded affirmatively.

"Mind if I wander a way with ye?"

In all truth, Kioga liked nothing about the stranger; and he was about to refuse the company of the newcomer, when he chanced to glimpse Sits-in-Sun, standing stiff and pallid with fear. In an instant he knew what was in her mind: The man had eaten so much that she associated him immediately with the hungry "spirit" of the previous night. To her mind, refusing the trapper their company would endanger the success of their journey, for the spirit might actually dwell in the person of John Smith.

However absurd the Snow Hawk may have thought such a belief, he did not wish to cause the old woman further worry; and after all, he had nothing tangible against the other man. Therefore he simply nodded, raising no objection to the trapper's company. . . . He was to regret his softening.

THE trapper's "spirit" was of a different nature than metaphysical.

Returning next day from a short exploration of the neighboring wilderness, Kioga found several of his younger braves in a stupor, while others laughed loudly and talked boisterously, with loosened tongues. John Smith had been distributing liquor among them, in return for certain desirable properties of theirs. A quick glance discovered him examining his new acquisitions, obtained in trade for the whisky.

In ten strides Kioga was beside the guide with uplifted ax. The man leaped aside, but the stroke was not intended for him. Instead it fell upon the whisky-keg. And then, without hesitation Kioga went to the man's canoe and began cracking each keg open.

Furiously the trapper saw his contraband seeping away in the sand. He seized the prow of the canoe to thrust it out of harm's way—with the result that the falling ax-blow struck the frail craft itself, ruining it. Now he snatched up his rifle, then caught himself in hand—fortunately, for had he so

much as leveled it, any one of four ready knives would have slit his throat.

Thinking to divest the man of his gains, Kioga reflected that when sober the Indians must resent the trader as much as the trade. So without a word he turned his back, while the trapper, white with rage, glared his hatred.

In point of fact, in he who called himself John Smith the worst dross of two races was run into a common mold. Though a primitive passion swept him now, native cunning overcame it.

RED dawn found the camp astir, packing for the day's journey; and Kioga, as was his habit, prepared to reconnoiter a little way ahead. At the beach he heard a light footfall behind him, and turned to see Pretty Eagle approaching. He greeted her courteously in the Indian figure.

"A beautiful day begins."

"May it end as beautiful," said Pretty Eagle, glancing behind her; then she spoke swiftly. "The half-breed, he is drinking again. Beware of him. He bears you ill will, Kioga."

The Snow Hawk smiled. "He is the least of my enemies," he told her quietly. "Fear not. My eyes have not been closed."

As he paddled away, her eyes followed him. Lowering a container, she then dipped water from the river. Turning to retrace her steps, the dark eyes hardened, for the trapper was close at her heels. With flushed face and averted gaze she would have passed, but he would not give her way. Boldly he leaned closer. His strong breath reeked in her pale oval face.

"I go away soon," he said. "Come on with me. I know how to treat a girl right."

Infuriated by the insult, the girl dropped the water-bag and reached for the slim knife in her belt. But his fingers fell upon her wrist, twisting brutally.

"Eater of carcajou! Let me go!" she panted fiercely. "I am not for you, swiller in rum!"

"You see only the white dog."

"Fool! Shall I rouse the camp?" she threatened, struggling in his grasp. But fired by her nearness, he would not let go.

She threatened anew.

"Him you call the white dog has fangs. He will hear of this."

Silent and unnoticed, a canoe drifted upon the scene. Thinking on Pretty Eagle's words, Kioga had but turned a

bend, before returning, the better to maintain watch on "Smith." An instant later the trapper, crushed to his knees, stared death in the face, while steel fingers choked the breath from him. When he recovered consciousness, the trapper found his head ground into the wet sand while Kioga kicked water into his face.

"If I told the band of this," Kioga said to him, "they would cut your eyes out. No more of this, or it will cost you dear. You stay with us this last day—because we need your labor. Tonight, you go!"

Toward nightfall, alert to find a camping-place, Kioga ordered the canoes to drift. Absorbed in searching out a safe passage among the under-water rocks, he was leaning forward, eyes upon the murky river-bottom, when behind him the volcano that was the trapper erupted suddenly into action.

Warned by the inner voice to which he never turned deaf ear, Kioga drew back even as a deafening concussion made his eardrums ring. A red groove along his forearm suddenly filled with blood. The trapper, who had been middle man in the freight-loaded canoe, had struck without warning, drunkenly heedless of consequences, knocking one Indian unconscious with his rifle, then firing at Kioga.

As the Snow Hawk wheeled, the half-breed was clutching at something which twined about his neck from behind, his rifle slipping into deep water. . . . In the dusk Kioga was a second determining the nature of the trapper's assailant. Suddenly he saw; and seeing, understood much that had been a mystery in the last several days.

A thin brown arm clutched John Smith about the neck, while its mate, flourishing a small steel blade in the other hand, struggled in the half-breed's grasp. The man shifted his shoulders sharply, throwing his young assailant across the canoe.

And that assailant was Tokala the Fox, appearing as out of thin air in their midst!

FIVE yards separated the two drifting craft. The breed's fingers had closed on Tokala's slim neck, throttling the shrill battle-yell. With his tortured back crushed down upon the gunwale, the boy struggled manfully. But in another moment his back would have been broken.

Then it was that Kioga's heavy paddle, hurled spearlike, struck the man in the



Beth and Dan La Salle

back of the head, knocking him asprawl into the stream. Released, Tokala fell back into the canoe.

A few feet away was the shore. Leaping knee-deep into the water, Kioga snatched the boy into his arms. White-faced, with cruel red marks on face and neck, little Tokala lay lifelessly against his arm.

And as the Snow Hawk turned to step ashore, the trapper rose unsteadily behind him with upraised knife, the intention plain to plunge it into Kioga's back. Then, on feathered vanes, came swift check. A sharp hiss, as of a breath indrawn, preceded the *whick-k* of a striking arrow. Transfixed through the neck, Smith fell, coughing blood. A long-drawn cry rose quaveringly. An instant later the active old figure which was Bull-calf jumped ashore with *coup-stick* ready.

Tokala had had the honor of counting the first *coup*. But Bull-Calf was intent on being second and struck the fallen man a light blow. Immediately following came Bets-His-Shirt to count third *coup*.

The Indian who had been struck by the trapper's gun was brought to, and his injuries bandaged. And that night Tokala, the little stowaway, faced a solemn-faced jury of his elders, demanding an accounting of his presence.

Little by little Kioga gently drew from the boy a halting confession. He had secreted himself in the *parfêche* box, with the knowledge and consent of Smiling Woman. Each day she had brought him food and water. Each night, with her connivance he had emerged like a jack-in-the-box to loosen his cramped

muscles. He had slept, he blushingly confessed, in the young women's tent, returning to his voluntary prison before the camp was yet awake.

One night, unable to resist, he had stolen forth and taken a piece of meat from Sits-in-Sun's rack. He was also the spirit who had appropriated her spirit-offering. The mystery of Smiling Woman's medicine-box was solved. . . . His story told, the small stowaway darted a fearful glance about the circle of the chiefs. Never a smile on those stern brown features! Glumly Tokala stared at the ground, the picture of pathos and complete dejection, awaiting judgment.

Came then the voice of Kioga, stern and slow, to the councilors.

"He has told his tale. What shall his punishment be?"

Lower fell the head of Tokala.

"It should be severe," answered Bets-His-Shirt.

Rounder grew the stooped little shoulders.

"The punishment should fit the offense," added Bull-Calf. "Let Kioga set the penalty."

The Snow Hawk cleared his throat.

"So be it. Tokala, you have disobeyed your chiefs. You must be punished. The chiefs have said it. Therefore—"

Tokala's heart withered in his small bare breast.

"First," continued the Snow Hawk, "stand erect like a man and face the council!" The boy's dark head snapped up, misery and resignation in his eyes. "Second: you shall take this hook and line and catch ten thousand fish in the river. Not for your belly, but for the dogs. From this hour they are your care. Do this work well—and mayhap the offense will be washed out. I have said it!"

A MOMENT Tokala stood thrilling to the meaning of the sentence—no return to hated civilization, no punishment worthy the name, only work—a man's, a hunter's work! He felt tears close to his lids. He reached forth, snatched hook and line and then ran, as if a *wendigo* pursued him, toward the river.

Behind him the solemn councilors contained themselves for but another moment. Then a roar of laughter sounded through the camp.

Smiling Woman, called to defend her deception, took a defiant attitude, a woman's privilege. "Did I not tell you the *parfleche* box contained what had be-

longed to my brother. Did I not say it was *wakan* to him? *Ai-i*, what have I done that is wrong?"

Again the chiefs laughed, long and loud.

So came Tokala into an honored place in the band, having aided the Snow Hawk in battle and counted first *coup* upon a fallen foe—a feat entitling him to wear, at ten years of age, an honor of the first grade, an erect eagle-feather in the scalp-lock. Bull-Calf took it from his own war-bonnet and placed it in Tokala's hair.

CHAPTER V

DESTINATION UNKNOWN

WHILE Kioga and his band journeyed northward toward the Promised Land of Nato'wa, another expedition was in preparation in the seaport of San Francisco. Quietly berthed in her dock, a small two-masted auxiliary schooner had undergone overhauling in preparation for a journey which would have startled science and aroused the attention of all the world.

The *Narwhal* was a ship with a past, and carried her prow high, as befitted one who had fought the Seven Seas and defied the Arctic. Beloved of many men in the course of a long career, changing her name for several owners, she had been faithful to all—as she would be true to her master of the present, who from her forward rail conned her lines with critical affection.

Stalwart, a little austere, was Dr. James Munro, traveler, explorer of far places, savant. Like his ship, Munro had been weathered and tried by many a storm, emerging fit and strong into the prime of middle life. The sum of his labors, and monument to his fame, is that collection of Indian relics housed in the museum which bears his name; and you will find him quoted everywhere as the foremost authority in his special field—the strange mysterious race known as the American Indian, of whose customs, history and language he probably knows more than any other living man. And he delighted above all else in visiting the people he loved, and pitied for the tragedy of their destruction by the white race.

His knowledge of their languages and customs gained him access to the lodges of red men on two continents. But it was by means of a peculiar hobby, his

mastery of sleight-of-hand and conjuring, that he had won his way into the hearts of scattered bands round many a distant camp-fire. And the name Swift-Hand spoken anywhere among them, would bring a smile and sudden unexpected animation to faces habitually stoical.

Munro's long search for the missing *Cherokee* had brought him oft into the far North. There he had met Kioga the Snow Hawk, and had come into possession of the wrecked *Cherokee's* strange history and a knowledge of the amazing discoveries made by its owner, Lincoln Rand. Now, in the prime of maturity, when many men would have sat with pipe, dog and book at a warm fireplace, a new and magnificent adventure fired his imagination: He would seek this new-found land of Nato'wa, verify the findings of its discoverer Lincoln Rand, and explore it further.

SLOWLY Dr. Munro climbed down the forecastle hatch and vanished below. Through the galley, he moved aft into the main cabin, which had accommodation for several persons around a great table under the reinforced skylight.

The ship's interior reflected the scientific nature of her previous employment: There were devices for making depth-soundings; wire nets on long cables for trawling the ocean bottom; depth thermometers and other instruments and tools used by the geologists. Everywhere on the walls were harpoons and their lines, ice-axes, picks and shovels, and various other tackle. The *Narwhal* was equipped with every modern device, lighted by ship-generated electricity, heated by oil. A double sheathing protected her from the formation of inside ice, during extreme cold, due to breath and cooking steam.

Passing through the engine-room, Munro entered a large after cabin, whose walls were hung with more harpoons, ropes and rifles on appropriate racks. This was the chart-room, containing also maps, sextant, chronometer and compasses, in addition to two-way radio equipment.

Adjoining this were Munro's own personal quarters aft, enriched by many colorful and interesting articles. Surrounded by his choice little wall-library, he now took his ease, scanning the list of his crew. In most respects it was a personnel of which to be proud:

Barry Edwards, his Canadian assistant

was tried and proved and had been with him on the Northern fies when he went to the rescue of those abandoned by the whaler *Bearcat*. His engineer Lars Hanson was a resourceful and able man, an American-born Swede, a competent sailor of immense good nature. An expert in marine engines, his knowledge, added to Munro's inventive ability, had given the *Narwhal* an engine capable of burning whale oil if the need arose.

The mate, Peter Edson, combined the virtues of first-class carpenter with his other qualifications, which were above reproach. Of Dan La Salle he was sure, for Dan had been of the party which survived the sinking of the *Alberta*—a competent wireless operator, his efforts as an amateur had saved life when the *Alberta* went down. He would also be valuable as one who had knowledge of the highly dangerous tortuous channel in the reefs through which they must approach Nato'wa. Dan was absent on a quest ashore for news of Kioga, but was expected soon to rejoin the ship.

At the name John Henders, Munro paused to speculate. This man held the important place of cook; and as a cook, Munro held nothing against Henders; but he had come aboard drunk on two occasions—and Munro made a note to replace him at first opportunity.

One other member of his expedition gave Munro further perplexity. This was Beth La Salle, sister to Dan, and like him a survivor of the *Alberta*. Munro had earlier experienced grave misgivings concerning her presence, but she herself had dissipated his concern.

Having no other close kin than father and brother, she had long dwelt in a man's world, and her disarmingly frank way with the crew had both attracted favor and then discountenanced familiarity by reason of its impartiality. Knowing and trusting every man but one of his crew, Munro feared not for her personal safety. But that a civilized young woman could adjust herself to the long darkness and complete isolation of the Arctic, he could not be sure.

ELSEWHERE on that ship, the object of Munro's thoughts gazed out into the dusk, inhaling the smell of tar and of fresh paint and new yellow rope.

Beth La Salle stood above the average height for a woman. Diana herself was not formed on more gracefully supple lines, nor was the huntress more agile. Her mouth was beautiful—and resolute.

She wore practical masculine garb in a manner possible to few women, with dash and decided grace.

No anemic clinging beauty was Beth La Salle, but quick and surprisingly strong. There was young athletic strength in her walk now as going below to the quarters adjoining Munro's, which she was to share with Dan, she took pen in hand and drafted a letter to her well-loved Aunt Margaret. She wrote:

"Dear Aunt Mag:

"Your letter reached me today. There's a lot I never told you about what happened after the *Alberta* left port, months before she sank. As you know, Allan Kendle went north to shoot specimens of Pacific coast animals for the Museum. Unfortunately we 'lay to' as the sailors say, to pick up a load of shipwrecked men, who later proved most ungrateful guests.

"They mutinied, disabled the ship. Storms drove us far offshore and into ice-filled Arctic waters. After passing through dangerous ice and dreadful reefs, we finally grounded on an unknown coast. Shortly afterward the mutineers attacked the crew, nearly killed Allan and carried me off as hostage. In searching for me later, Allan was captured by wild tribesmen inhabiting the coast, which was not that of an island as we had thought, but evidently an unknown land.

"In a quarrel one of the mutineers killed another. It looked pretty bad for your little Beth. Suddenly, from nowhere, came rescue by one I took for a demon, half-naked and streaked with war-paint. Oh, but I wish you could have seen him knock down those cut-throats! I shall never forget it, nor all else he did for us later. And we were the first white people he had ever seen.

"While returning me to the ship he rescued Allan from the fire-stake. We three escaped with a hundred savages yelling on our heels. Sometimes it seems impossible that we passed through such horrible experiences and lived to tell of them! But nothing was impossible to our new friend. He spoke and wrote English. We learned he was the son of white parents, shipwrecked here long ago. His name was Lincoln Rand, but he was known to the natives as Kioga the Snow Hawk. He had lived long among them and was high in their councils—until we came. Our rescue earned him their enmity.

"Kioga found us meat, guided us safely through the reefs, found more meat when the ship sank and all looked black. Then the terrible thing happened. While Kioga was out hunting one night, the whaler *Bearcat* came up and took us aboard. Your weakling niece was unconscious. Allan deliberately encouraged

the *Bearcat* to sail, leaving Kioga behind. Dan protested; but Captain Scott, with sick men aboard and in danger of being beset by the ice, steamed away. We knew nothing of this until much later. When I came to and learned of Kioga's abandonment, I never suspected Allan of such a brutal deception.

"But Kioga didn't die. You couldn't conceive of such a man dying! He was picked up later by Dr. Munro, the famous scientist, and taken aboard the *Narwhal*, bound for San Francisco. Knowing that one word from him would result in my breaking off with Allan, Kioga never even let us know he was alive. He believed I loved Allan, you see. A few days before Allan became ill, Dan discovered that Kioga was alive. He told me just as I was leaving to be with Allan through a crisis in his illness. I wrote a hurried line, telling Kioga I would see him the following day; Allan's sickness prevented. Kioga attributed my delay to indifference. Oh, if he only knew! In delirium Allan betrayed himself. After learning *that*, everything was at an end between Allan and me.

"On the *Narwhal*, from which I write, we await Dan's return, hoping that he will have found some trace of Kioga. If he is unsuccessful, we sail for Juneau or some other northern port to lie up for the winter. In spring we set out in earnest. Munro will be going on an explorer's adventure. Dan has always wanted to go back to the new-found land. It fascinates him. As for me—Kioga risked his life for us, fed us when we hungered, abandoned his people to be at my side, and finally sacrificed himself, as he thought, for my happiness. Can I do less than follow him?

"You ask me what I feel for this man Kioga. I can only answer that when I heard he had been abandoned, the sun grew dark. Nothing matters on this earth but seeing him again.

"The ship is ready to sail north. Dan will be with me, so you needn't worry. I hope to see Dad in Alaska and bid him good-by. We shall reach Nato'wa, God willing, find Kioga and make a safe return. Until then, bless you, dear, and remember kindly,

"Your affectionate niece,
Beth."

LEAVING the ship in darkness and alone, Beth mailed her letter and was boarding the *Narwhal* again when out of the darkness came a hail.

She turned, with swiftly beating heart, recognized the voice.

"Dan! Is it you?"

"Me, all right," came from the dock. A tall shadow followed the voice down the gangplank. A moment passed while

they embraced; then the girl pushed the newcomer away and searched his face in the glow of a side-light. Her voice was tense with an emotion he understood.

"Dan—any trace of Kioga?"

"Traces enough!" he began, checking her rising excitement with a negative wave of the hand. "But it's contact we wanted, Beth, not traces. No use me telling the whole story twice. Let's find Munro, and have it over in one telling."

Greeted cordially by the scientist, in the privacy of Munro's own cabin Dan recounted his experiences since first he had begun his search for the missing Snow Hawk.

Unsuccessful in his early efforts, he had finally unearthed a few clues in a Western cattle-town near the Canadian border. A half-breed had told him a tale of a mounted Indian band that had started northward under the leadership of a stranger who corresponded roughly to a description of Kioga. Then came reported discovery of a burial rack, bearing two blanketed bodies—new corpses but painted in the manner of long ago. A long-distance call established the fact that an Indian band had left the crippled river-steamer *Athabaska*, and had proceeded northward by canoe.

From another quarter, from reliable sources, came a news-report backed up by actual photographs. They were pictures of an elevated burial scaffold, bearing the body of an old chief, wrapped in a blanket which flapped in the wind. From the scaffold hung a painted medicine-shield; and near by crouched the body of a woman, which had not decayed, but had mummified. Beside the dead woman's body lay a knife, a bone needle and a piece of dried meat.

Milestones. Milestones all, marking the path of the strangest caravan of this century.

"All evidence," concluded Dan, "of something. If I don't miss my guess, Kioga went that way."

"And with him a band of reservation Indians," mused Munro, "—old men and women who remembered the old way. One by one they died away. And yet—I don't quite see—"

"The Canadian police?" interrupted Beth suddenly.

"Exactly," began Munro; but Dan covered that point with an observation.

"Great organization. But not omnipresent. The North is full of Indians and breeds, roving around hunting and fishing. Canada treats 'em with a decent consideration. You can't expect a handful of men to know everything that goes on in an area of that size. Can't be done. If any Mounty does know they passed through his territory, he hasn't said so."

The girl sat in silence.

"Sorry, Beth," said Dan, covering her hands with his own. If she was disappointed, she concealed it. Rising—

"We haven't been idle while you were gone," she said quietly. "Come and look over our treasure-chests."

MUNRO followed them into the adjoining cabin, where Beth knelt and opened a long chest displaying an assortment of objects such as has not been taken into northern seas since the first beginnings of the fur-trade.

There were little boxes of blue, red and yellow beads; packages of needles; yard on yard of bright-colored cloth; awls, hatchets, steel knives, iron kettles and hand-mirrors. There were quantities of brass and copper wire; packets of brilliant powdered paints; bright-hued kerchiefs; little music-boxes that tinkled pleasantly when raised from the table, and tin harmonicas and flutes; small dolls with movable eyes, and toys that flashed forth sparks at the pressure of a thumb-lever.

Stored away in the lazarette was a watertight box filled with assorted fireworks, pin-wheels, Roman-candles, fire-crackers of all sizes. There were also aromatic packages of tea and tobacco and small bottles of cheap cologne.

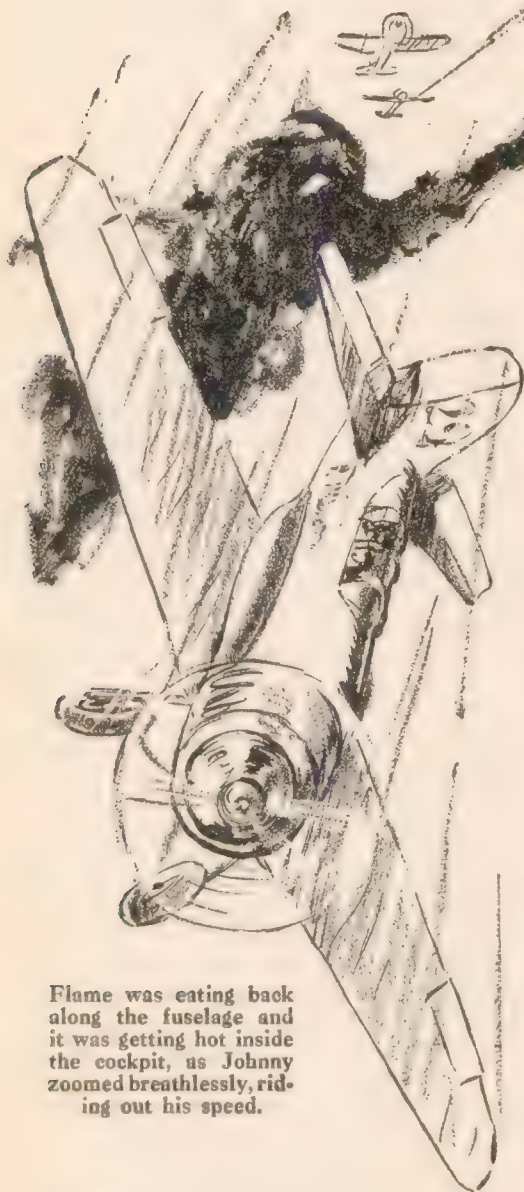
At sight of these supplies for the Indian trade, something deep within the younger man stirred. His eyes had looked upon the splendid forests of Nato'wa, whose little-known shore his feet had pressed. His blood had stained its savage ground, drawn by the attack of a wild animal whose claw-marks in his side still ached on wet days. All that was young and venturesome in his nature anticipated their return to Nato'wa. He turned to Munro:

"When do we start, sir?" he asked.

Munro laughed at his eagerness. "We were only waiting for you, Dan. We sail on the tide."

How Kioga and his Indian friends fight their way back to the primeval wilderness of Nato'wa, and what befell them in that savage land; of the strange desperate voyage of the *Narwhal*—these and many other interesting events are described in the next installment of this extraordinary story.

THE thrill-crammed story of a flying circus, a break-neck airplane race and a desperate moment at the final pylon—by the pilot writer who gave us "The Speed King" and "Murder Island."



Flame was eating back along the fuselage and it was getting hot inside the cockpit, as Johnny zoomed breathlessly, riding out his speed.

JOHNNY WALGREN stood on the third rung of his stepladder and with a feeler gauge and screw-driver did things to his racing plane's engine. The tools made clinking musical sounds in contact with the steel; and

Johnny made allegedly musical sounds, humming. It didn't matter at all about the tune. Nobody heard him. He was alone in the hangar, and nobody could get in because the doors were closed—and locked; he'd seen to it himself that they were locked securely.

So he worked deftly, and he felt exactly right about everything. Everything was as perfect as it possibly could be, and he was happy. For last night Gwen Gibbs had come back, and tomorrow he was going to win the Benson Trophy race—if this Wasp did its stuff the way it should. . . .

And then, suddenly, things weren't perfect any longer. A figure lurched from the leanto office of the hangar, and weaved across the concrete floor. Poised and alert, there on the ladder, Johnny looked down at big Dan Gibbs, Gwen's father; and even from this distance he could tell that Dan was drunk again.

"You li'l fox!" Dan Gibbs boomed, advancing on unsteady legs. "You li'l fox, I knew you'd be here, an' I made 'em let me in!" He came up to the ladder, a florid-faced man in a shaggy brown wind-breaker jacket and a crumpled hat. His eyes were slightly glazed. "You take care of this li'l puddle-jumper, kid, an' tomorrow we'll both be rollin' in the dough!"

Standing there with his hands full of tools, Johnny kept the anger and disappointment from his voice. He said, "I thought you were on the wagon, Dan—"

"G'wan!" roared Dan. "Listen, kid, I sold the circus, an' I just bet sixty thousand iron men on you to win the Benson go."

Johnny Walgren whistled through his teeth, and as he climbed down from the

The Flaming Finish

By LELAND JAMIESON

ladder, he felt cold. He regarded Dan with incredulity.

"You—*what?*?"

"I sold our flying circus," Dan repeated.

Oddly, when Dan was drinking, his tongue never thickened very much, and his speech was always clear. He did idiotic things when he was drunk, and sometimes never knew he'd done them, later on. Once he had traded a new trimotored airplane for a run-down alligator farm, which in due time he let the sovereign State of Florida confiscate for taxes.

"Sold the circus!" Johnny echoed in a hollow tone.

"Well," said Dan, "I didn't just exactly sell it, kid. A English gen'leman tried to give me sixty thousand dollars for it, but I wouldn't sell at first. So we made a sporting proposition. I bet the circus against his sixty thousand dollars, so I just the same as sold it out, I guess. Only, I was mighty slick! Tomorrow, I'll have the sixty thousand and we'll have the circus too!" He slapped his thigh and laughed uproariously.

Johnny pursed his lips and frowned. "Listen, Dan," he said. "Are you so drunk you can't remember? Who was the Englishman?"

"You wouldn't know him," Dan said. "All you've got to do is win the Benson race tomorrow, an' we're rollin' in the dough!"

Johnny wondered how it was possible to feel so confident and grand one moment, and so downright scared, the next. Just a while ago he had been sure he'd win the Benson race, but now he wasn't sure at all. The knowledge that everything in the world he and Dan had was in the balance of that race did something to him. It tightened up his nervous system and it planted a deep-seated, growing apprehension.

"Look," he said desperately, and took Dan by the arm and walked him toward the door and out to his car. "You're not drunk, are you, Dan? You understand

what this can do to us. Don't you understand we've got to call this crazy business off?"

Dan jerked his arm away. His eyes were brightly blank. "I'll handle my own business," he asserted truculently. "Don't try to tell *me* what to do! You're one of the help, kid, and don't forget it!"

Johnny Walgren thought swiftly. In drink, Dan was always pugnacious and intractable. But this was one case which couldn't be allowed to run its normal course, Johnny realized. Suppose that he *didn't* win that race tomorrow? Everything would be lost. A dozen splendid planes, ten years of work, all hope for the future—everything. He had to stop it. And he was going to stop it.

"Who was this Englishman?" he asked again, persuasively. "Don't you want me to go along and talk to him and be a witness to the terms?"

"Terms're all right," Dan grumbled. "We got plenty witnesses. I was slick enough for that, kid. Now you finish checkin' that engine—an' tomorrow, you better win that race!"

"DAN," Johnny pleaded solemnly, "stop and think a minute, please! Are you so drunk you don't know what this—"

"Stow it, kid!" Dan snapped.

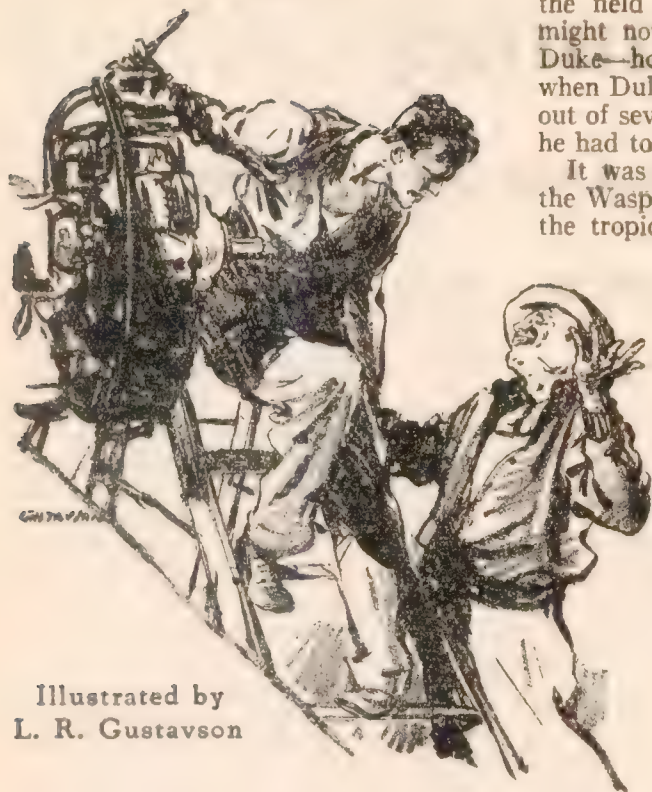
"I won't stow it," Johnny answered stubbornly, his voice a little shrill with rising anger. "You haven't got a right to do a thing like this, and I won't let you!" He took hold of Dan's arm again, and urged him toward the car.

Dan brushed his hand away. "Keep your greasy fingers off me," he growled.

A kind of desperation seized Johnny Walgren suddenly. He tightened his grip, propelling Dan with force.

And Dan Gibbs swung at him with a vicious massive fist.

Johnny dodged. It happened so unexpectedly that he had no time to check himself, to think. He wouldn't have struck Dan for a thousand dollars; but when Dan jabbed, he countered re-



Illustrated by
L. R. Gustavson

the field with ease, of course, but he might not beat Duke Harde. To beat Duke—how could he be sure of that, when Duke had beaten him in four races out of seven in the past two years? But he had to beat Duke.

It was almost dusk when he finished the Wasp—the swift, opalescent dusk of the tropics. Johnny locked the hangar

"Listen, kid," Dan Gibbs boomed. "I sold our flying circus—or just the same as sold it. Only, I was mighty slick. Tomorrow I'll have the sixty thousand—and the circus too!"

flexively with a left hook that connected with a thudding impact. Dan crumpled in a heap, and he didn't get up. Stupefied by alcohol and stunned by shock, he passed out, cold.

FOR a moment, it all seemed utterly unreal. Realization and reaction left Johnny Walgren weak and sick. As a crowd of curious bystanders gathered, he lifted Dan's great bulk into the back seat of his car, and got in and drove to town. A doctor wasn't necessary, but he got a doctor. They took Dan to Johnny's room at the hotel and got him into bed. The doctor was to stay there for a while. There was no use in Johnny's staying; it would be no use to question Dan Gibbs further, now.

Johnny went back and finished checking the engine of his plane. His mind kept turning to Gwen, and he was miserable, wondering how he could bring himself to tell her what had happened. There was no one in the world more lovable than Dan Gibbs—when he was sober. Johnny decided he wasn't going to tell Gwen, unless he lost the race.

The race loomed now not as the joyful competition it had been, but as something which dismayed him with its consequences. He could beat most of

carefully and went outside and stared moodily across the flying-field. Overhead, stars incredibly brilliant stabbed through the purple dome of night. The Miami skyline threw up a band of delicate blue amber on the clouds. The peace and serenity of evening brought to Johnny a sudden weariness with the constant stark uncertainty of barnstorming. He was tired. He decided he would give this race tomorrow everything he had, and then put in two months loafing. He remembered suddenly that he couldn't loaf now. If he were to do anything about that bet, he must get back to the hotel and question Dan.

But when he reached the hotel, he found Dan gone. There was a sheet of paper stuck against the door with Dan's penknife. It said: "Get some sleep tonight so you can do your stuff tomorrow. Don't hand me any square lock-washers, kid! —P. S. I paid the doctor."

Johnny tore up the note in anger. One thing, Dan was getting sober. If he got sober enough, he might call that fool bet off—if he remembered having made it. He must have remembered it, to say that in the note. Johnny felt worried and sore as a fresh blister. He was in no frame of mind to see Gwen, but he would

have broken his leg before he would have broken a date with her. As best he could, he composed his mind, while he dressed and went to her hotel. Tomorrow, somehow, he'd win that race, and everything would be all right. Or maybe, before the race, he could bring Dan to his senses, if it wasn't too late. But tonight, he'd try to show Gwen how glad he was to have her back.

SHE met him in the lobby. She wore an evening dress of sheer blue stuff that deepened the color of her eyes. Johnny forgot about Dan Gibbs, almost.

They were finishing dinner at the Babylon when the waiter came unobtrusively with a note, and whispered: "The man at the table under the balcony sent this, sir." Johnny took the note, and furtively scrutinized the man. He was dark, with thin, tense lips.

The note was in a scrawling penciled hand. It said: "If you want to make ten thousand dollars, come and see me." Johnny sat there frowning at it, puzzled by a vague sense of warning. It was absurd, that feeling, but it was very real.

Gwen said: "He's mysterious-looking! Isn't it nice I'm never overcome with curiosity?"

Johnny grinned: "Some day those prying little ears will get you in a jam. I've got to find out what this is." He thought he knew already, but he slid his chair back and got up.

"The next dance is going to be a waltz!" Gwen protested with her best hurt look. But Johnny was already swinging his rangy frame across the polished floor.

He folded down into the waiting chair, under the balcony, and looked into a pair of inscrutably cold eyes in a hard, tanned, impassive face. He said huskily: "Okay, let's have it. Fast."

"Hello, Walgren," the man said; "my name is Gerro. There's ten grand in it for you if you drop the Benson Trophy race tomorrow. Have I said it fast enough?"

Johnny thought, "I guess I did know what it was about." He started to get up. "Not interested," he said curtly.

Gerro's voice, utterly cold, pinned him back against his chair. "You do not win the race tomorrow. I am telling you. If you win tomorrow, you won't live five minutes. You should be interested in that."

A kind of tingling numbness spread like a flush across Johnny's rugged,

wind-burned face. Anger brightened his eyes, but an underlying caution checked him.

"What makes you think you'll get away with this?" he challenged.

Gerro's strong brown fingers manipulated a silver cigarette-case casually. "There are ways of doing things," he said.

"Not this," Johnny snapped. "Why, you—" He reached across to grab Gerro by the collar, but the other was too quick.

"Do not be a fool!" Gerro murmured, unperturbed. His right hand was underneath his coat lapel; his left was pushing a slip of blue paper across the table cloth. He added with a spurious benignity: "You can cash this at Tony's—after the race. We are generous—we could merely kill you, you know. But we are not joking!"

Johnny stared at the draft. It was for ten thousand dollars, payable to him. He said, "Who sent you to try to fix this up with me?"

Gerro shrugged. "I *have* fixed it. I know you wish to live, and I think you understand that we are not—what do you call it?—kidding you. So I know you will not win."

"The hell with it!" But even as he spoke and shoved the draft away, Johnny saw Gerro turn a quick glance toward the door. Before he could more than half rise, two men came through the door and reached his side. The silent, watchful imperturbability of their faces was sinisterly fascinating.

"Walgren," Gerro said, "these men will do exactly what I tell them. If you fly that race, you do not win it—you understand? I will accept your word."

THE swift thought crossed Johnny's mind that there probably was no police assistance within half a dozen miles. He could expect no help from the waiters or the management. The place was crowded, busy, noisy, oblivious to what was happening. Gerro's thugs, at one word, as easily as not could take him for a ride.

"How do I know I'll be able to collect this?" he asked slowly through lips that had turned stiff, and he picked up the draft again. He didn't know what he was going to do. But it was useless to resist, and he decided to accept the draft and appear to acquiesce.

"You can trust me," Gerro said. "Both for the money, and to have my

men on the field close to you all day tomorrow—nor very far from you at any time tonight. And if you should win the race it will be—what is the term?—too bad.”

Johnny left them and crossed the floor and sat once more with Gwen. The orchestra was still playing, the trumpets *doo-wahing* against the smooth sliding harmony of the reeds. Colored floodlights sprayed shafts of brilliance on the dancers. But now Johnny Walgren scarcely saw or heard.

GWEN waited through that fox-trot patiently, and then asked:

“What’s the matter, Johnny?”

He met her eyes, and looked quickly away. He couldn’t tell her. “Nothing,” he said. “Just thinking.”

“Well, don’t,” she said. “You look exactly as you did that time a wing spar cracked and you lost an aileron. What—”

“Let’s dance,” said Johnny almost roughly, and got up.

Gwen gave him a straight, wondering look, and followed. The physical activity of dancing cleared his brain somewhat. But he couldn’t keep his mind away from Gerro. He couldn’t help visualizing what would happen if he didn’t throw the race tomorrow afternoon, and realizing in a mounting agitation what would happen if he did. And finally Gwen said with a faint exasperation:

“I don’t think it’s any use, Johnny. You have the grace of a two-ton truck. What on earth’s come over you?”

He said, “I guess this is an off night, sugar. Let’s blow.”

“Blow where?” Gwen said. “We just came.”

“Home,” he said. “I want to see your dad.”

She gave him a quick, beseeching smile. “Johnny, is it something you couldn’t possibly tell me?”

He said bluntly, “It isn’t anything you’d care to hear,” and took her arm and they walked back to their table. He saw that Gerro and the other two had gone.

But even at this late hour, Dan Gibbs was not at his apartment. Johnny went to two places where Dan occasionally played poker, but Dan hadn’t been there. He went home and spent a long time, telephoning. At three o’clock he finally gave up and went to bed. He had to get some rest.

He lay there in bed, mind working at high speed; and he couldn’t rest. The

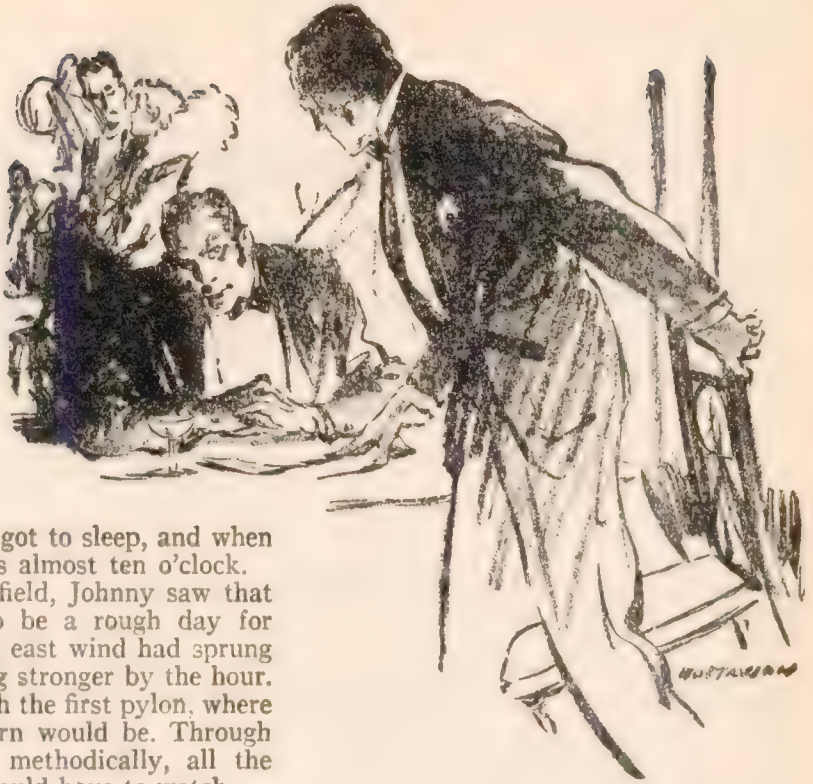
race was going to start at two o’clock this afternoon, and it would last perhaps twenty-four or -five minutes. It was for a hundred miles. Johnny flew that race a dozen times, lying there in bed, smoking one cigarette after another, getting wider awake as daylight neared. The more he flew it, the more he knew he was in a tough spot. If he won—well, he knew that Gerro meant just what he said. If he lost the race, although he made every honest effort to win, he still would be in a spot. Sooner or later somebody would find out about that draft, even though he never cashed it.

But Dan was in a tough spot, too, and he wasn’t going to let Dan down. Dan Gibbs had taught him to fly, and he’d been with the troupe ten years—since Gwen was wearing pigtails. He couldn’t quite believe, remembering, that it had been so long. Through those years they’d made a lot of money, and they’d gone from a one-ship, hand-to-mouth outfit to the biggest flying circus in the business. They had tri-motored transports and sleek, lean racers that would outrun nearly anything—a lot of modern, beautiful, expensive planes. Dan Gibbs and Bert Russell and he. And, of course, Gwen—Gwen, a little eager-eyed girl visiting her father through the summer interludes from boarding-school, and then, suddenly, Gwen—grown.

WITH a sudden resolution, Johnny sat up in bed. He had been attacking his problem from the wrong side. He knew Dan well enough to know it wasn’t any use that way. Maybe Dan did not remember making the bet, but even if he did, he was too stubborn to try to call the wager off. So it wasn’t any use to look for Dan. It was up to Johnny Walgren to win the race. He didn’t know what was going to happen, if he won it, but he knew he wasn’t going to throw the race away. No matter what Gerro threatened and no matter what Gerro did, Johnny knew in his heart that he couldn’t throw the race. He crushed out his cigarette bitterly. This might be a tough way to go at things, but it was the only way. Somehow, he had to win. . . .

It surprised him to discover that now it was almost dawn. Through the east window, sunrise was brushing a vivid ruby-red into the wind-torn clouds. Coming to a decision soothed his nerves remarkably. He burrowed his head in the

"Walgren," said Gerro, "you do not win the race tomorrow. Or if you win, you won't live five minutes."



pillow and finally got to sleep, and when he woke up it was almost ten o'clock.

Driving to the field, Johnny saw that this was going to be a rough day for the race. A puffy east wind had sprung up and was getting stronger by the hour. He'd have to watch the first pylon, where the down-wind turn would be. Through his mind passed, methodically, all the things which he would have to watch.

Already, at this time of the morning, the field was overrun by the hordes of tourists and curious spectators. Cars lined the road; cars surrounded the field solidly. The blatant screeching of concessionaires was like the shrilling of sea gulls fighting over flotsam. Johnny took it all in absently, crowding through with an occasional blare of horn to draw attention to the authority of his windshield sign: "Official."

In the hangar, with a minutely critical patience he went over his little maroon racing-plane again. He checked every gas and oil line, he checked controls, he checked everything that could possibly be checked. It surprised him, suddenly, to discover that it was already past one o'clock. After a late breakfast, he didn't want lunch. He wished Gwen and Dan would come, so he could have a quiet moment with them before the race began. It made Johnny feel a little queer, not having Gwen to send him off upon a race. It was an ill omen. He shrugged it aside. Superstition never bothered him. But he felt it, just the same. . . .

At one-thirty he helped roll the little crock outside the hangar, and started the engine and warmed it carefully. Then he taxied slowly to the starting line and took position between the little white monoplane of Dennison Carter and the

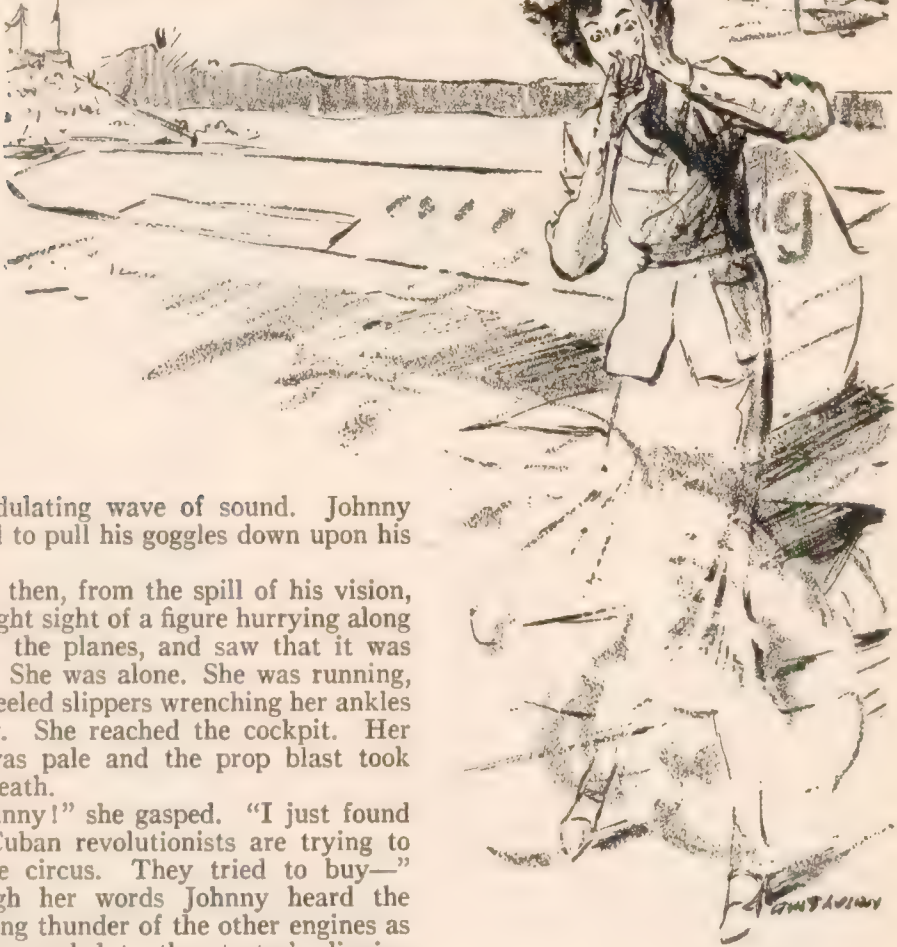
black one of Duke Harde. The engine whispered to a stop when he eased the altitude control full on.

Johnny sat there, checking his gas valves and engine instruments, reviewing once again the campaign he had laid out for flying this hard-contested race. All along the line, in the nine planes, other pilots were adjusting themselves and getting ready for the starter's flag. As usual, this was going to be a "race-horse" start, and the advantage gained at the first pylon might decide the struggle. Duke Harde, twenty yards away, looked across and grinned and flaunted fingers at his nose. Johnny waved his hand. It was surprising how his rigid fatalistic disregard for what might happen had taken on almost a narcotic quality. He wasn't at all nervous. But just the same, he wished Gwen had come; he wondered what had happened to her.

Down the line, an engine barked out, and the prop flashed silver. One by one the motors took life noisily. Johnny pressed his starter button and listened critically to the hearty eagerness of his rumbling exhaust.

The green flag of the starter poised there. Even above the mutter of engines, the roaring of the crowd came dimly in

Gwen's face was pale and the prop blast took her breath. "Johnny!" she gasped. "I just found out—Cuban revolutionists are trying to get the circus!"



an undulating wave of sound. Johnny started to pull his goggles down upon his eyes.

Just then, from the spill of his vision, he caught sight of a figure hurrying along behind the planes, and saw that it was Gwen. She was alone. She was running, high-heeled slippers wrenching her ankles cruelly. She reached the cockpit. Her face was pale and the prop blast took her breath.

"Johnny!" she gasped. "I just found out—Cuban revolutionists are trying to get the circus. They tried to buy—" Through her words Johnny heard the smashing thunder of the other engines as they responded to the starter's dipping flag.

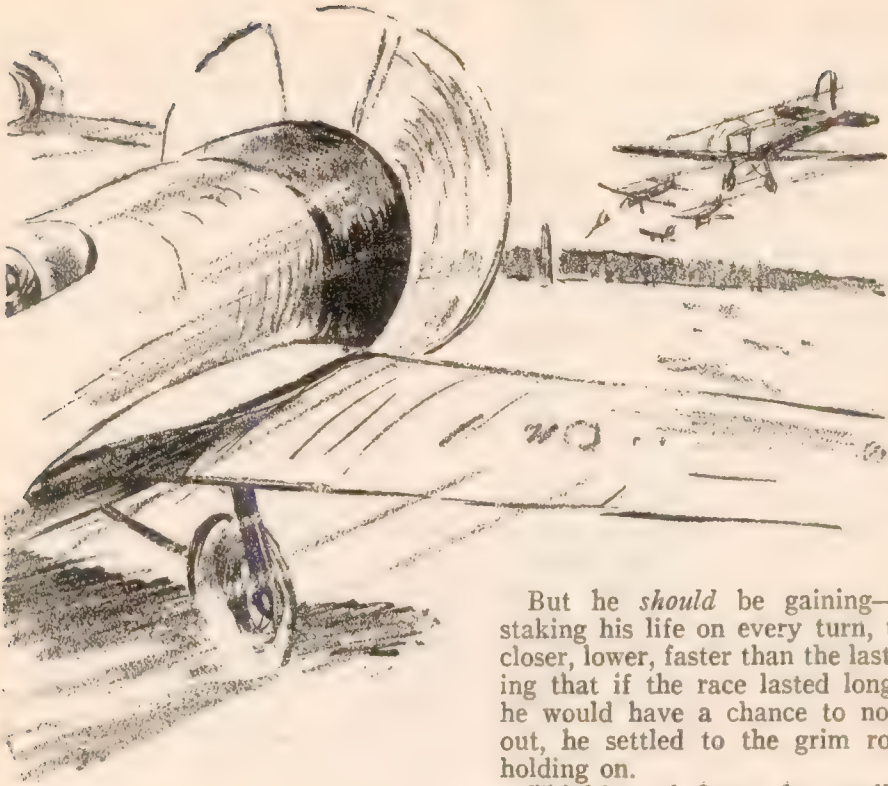
"Get back!" he yelled at her. Dust and the reek of engine fumes were in her nostrils. Already the other planes were under way. But he couldn't gun his engine until Gwen got clear of the tail. "Get back!" he shouted, and saw her lips move and saw her stagger out of danger as he slammed his throttle wide.

In the blinding wake of the other planes, he took off without seeing anything but sand and dust, on instruments. The field was rough and his wheels bounced in and out of sink-holes and he almost crashed before he ever got into the air. He hit a ridge and the plane leaped high. In a breathless stall, while the turbulence of other prop blasts tossed him like a leaf, he didn't know for a moment whether the plane was going to fly, or spin. If the motor had as much as sputtered once, he would have crashed in on a wing. But the motor didn't

sputter, and he slowly eased the nose down and fought frantically for speed.

It was incredible how much the others had already gained, in the dozen seconds of delay. Duke Harde was already well ahead, and Johnny knew that this was a handicap which only skill and desperate piloting would ever overcome.

Two miles separated him from the rearmost of the other planes. Johnny could see the thin spans of wings attached to fuselages. He saw them grow into a clot and bunch dangerously and turn together at the bunting tower sweeping back upon the straight-away. He fixed his eyes upon the pylon; he was trembling with a harsh excitement now. Bumps chopped at him. The engine revved snarling to two thousand and then still upward, laboring into a deep-toned reverberating howl. The air speed quivered at two-twenty and then -thirty and then -forty, where it hung.



The pylon leaped back from the horizon. Johnny judged his speed and distance tautly. He took in a deep breath and held it tight against his belt and banked up swiftly vertical around the tower.

Blood sang and pounded in his ears, draining his eyes of sight. He had no consciousness of fear. His brain was tightly concentrated on the grim necessity for holding on and never varying the turn. He couldn't see at all, now. If he varied, if he let the nose get down, the hurtling little craft would crash and strew his and its wreckage in the palmettos. He held on and then in relief eased the turn off and his vision cleared. Ahead, there, were the thin spans of those other wings again, and he could not see that he had gained on them at all.

They were stringing out, now. Duke Harde's little black crate was streaking past the grandstand on the beginning of the second lap, far in the lead. Johnny hit the second turn with smooth precision and came thundering down upon the grandstand at a hundred feet. Going into the turn, he got a quick glimpse of a sea of upturned faces, and something of the frenzy of the crowd was transferred to him as he realized he was slowly, surely, gaining on Duke Harde.

But he *should* be gaining—he was staking his life on every turn, taking it closer, lower, faster than the last. Knowing that if the race lasted long enough he would have a chance to nose Duke out, he settled to the grim routine of holding on.

Thinking of Gwen, he recalled what she had said. What was it—that Cuban revolutionists were trying to get Dan's planes? He didn't doubt that. The angle on the Englishman who had made the bet with Dan was mystifying, but it was obvious that Gerro was a Cuban. Cuba was overrun by rebel bands, and a rebel leader could not strike effectively without an air force—nor could he purchase modern military aircraft openly. In the whole United States there was no group of private planes so adaptable to military use as those which Dan Gibbs owned. If Gerro could obtain them and arm them and fly them to some obscure Cuban field, the next revolution might be a really potent thing.

HIS mind came sharply back to racing, as he whipped out of the second lap into the third. He had gained almost a mile, but he was not gaining nearly rapidly enough. There were seven laps, in all, and two of them were finished; and he still had more than a mile to gain on Duke—before the hair-raising task of passing Duke was reached. You never passed Duke without a battle, because Duke never failed to call a bluff. But there are breaks in racing, and Johnny fought his way past plane after plane, gaining steadily, and prayed and waited for a break.

Always, now, he shaved the pylons closer, swinging past them in shortening, breath-taking arcs, his lower wing almost clipping grass. Speed—speed—*speed!* It sang in his blood. It drugged his brain, a powerful stimulant. Bluffing the pilot of a little blue crate on a turn, he moved up into fourth position, finally, with less than twenty-five miles to go. He moved grimly into third position, taking his life in his hands.

AND then he almost lost it in one propeller-beat.

Monahan's golden twin-row Comet job was just ahead. Johnny was moving up, streaking up, doing two-fifty and holding his breath and timing the beginning of the turn before the stands. He took his eyes from Monahan, watching the pylon. When he looked again at the golden plane, he saw that it was belching a long spume of heavy smoke.

His concentration on that pylon almost killed him. He didn't see, until a split second before the two planes were going to come together, that the Comet was slowing fast and he was overrunning it. He couldn't turn; he couldn't dive, because both planes had less than a hundred feet already. Monahan's big engine had gone dead, and Monahan, intent only on getting clear of that thundering herd behind him, suddenly pulled up.

And Johnny, doing the only thing he could do, pulled up too!

He snatched the throttle closed, and it seemed to him that there was nothing in the world as big as that gilt-colored plane before his eyes. He felt his own prop knife shudderingly into Monahan's rudder. It made him cringe to think that Monahan would be left in the air without control, too low to jump. And then, in a fraction of a second, the golden plane had dropped below and out of sight and Johnny Walgren could hear nothing but the pounding of his heart. A moment later, as he swung trembling around the turn, he saw Monahan glide safely to earth in an adjoining field.

He realized numbly that the race was lost, although by that time his throttle was wide open and he was once more in desperate pursuit. Instead of helping him, the break that he had waited for had ruined everything; a carburetor float had stuck, maybe, on the Comet job.

Suddenly, thinking of that carburetor, Johnny leaned down and moved his altitude control ahead, watching the tachom-

eter. Of course he'd known all the time that air-cooled racing engines were set at extremely rich mixtures, because at wide-open throttle the surplus gasoline acted as a cooling agent. And he'd known that even at sea-level, opening the altitude control would lean the mixture and would give more engine revvs. You never leaned the mixture, in a race, for doing so would burn your engine up. But if he could get five minutes at a higher speed, before the engine went—

And as he watched, he saw the tach needle waver upward. . . . Forty, fifty, sixty—almost a hundred revvs! The air speed climbed. The little plane gained ten miles an hour before it reached the next pylon.

Johnny could almost see the distance between the two planes narrow, now. They took the east pylon a half a mile apart. His cylinder-head temperatures were climbing, and he prayed the pistons wouldn't melt. The plane was screaming at the wind, the engine moaning in its labor. The bumps were live things, incredibly vicious. All the heart that was in man and plane was straining to the utmost.

THEY were close, as they slashed around the final pylon. Eight miles of straight-away lay there ahead—and then the finish line. Johnny was above Duke Harde, and two hundred yards behind. Brown earth smeared past below at reckless speed. The gap between the two ships closed. They were flying wing-to-wing. In the stands a hundred thousand people were going mad with frenzy. Johnny moved up. If that engine stood up, nothing could stop him. Duke Harde looked across that space, and his face was tense and worried.

And then Johnny Walgren got a whiff of something in the cockpit, and his scalp went stiff with fright. He scarcely noticed when he passed Duke, for he was sniffing at that smell. Paint and oil. But there was something else—somewhere, there was flame. . . . Gooseflesh broke out along his neck.

He could see the smoke, now. It came back into the cockpit through the floor, spewing up and whipping back across his shoulders. It was in his face, and it stirred subconscious fears which he didn't know he had and which he couldn't overcome. He sucked in a lungful of that hot, stinking air, and it stirred his nerves almost to panic. With the greatest difficulty he fought to hold his lead

on Duke, and tried to disregard what he knew was happening up there.

Then he couldn't disregard it any longer. In the engine, a violent knocking started. There was a sharp metallic clanking sound, and then a sudden shivering explosion. And with the explosion, the engine quit, and open flame burst back along the fuselage.

Johnny acted with a mechanical response, now that he knew there wasn't any doubt about the fire. He never changed his course. He reached down and pulled the engine fire-extinguisher, knowing that it could only delay the flames and couldn't put them out. He turned off the gas, to keep fire from the tanks. Over his shoulder, in a frightened glance, he saw that Duke was crowding close behind him; Duke was going to pass him in a moment now.

Then, in a vast gratitude, he saw the grandstand flash underneath his wing, and knew that he had won the race.

But he had no time to think of that. Flame was eating back along the fuselage, and it was getting hot inside the cockpit. Johnny zoomed breathlessly, without power, riding out his speed. There was no life left in the shattered engine. To get away from the snarling planes behind him, he turned toward the west. It was downwind, and swamp land lay in that direction; but he couldn't turn east because the airport was crowded with pedestrians.

To get out of this alive, he had to zoom high enough, on speed alone, without power, to be able to use his parachute. He wasn't sure he could. He wasn't even sure he would be able to get out.

Smoke was choking him now. Flame scorched his face and hands, until he couldn't stand it. Even if he died, he had to get out. He clawed his way over the cockpit rim, blinded by smoke, and kicked away. The plane instantly was gone, and he pulled his rip-cord and the parachute boomed open dully. The sweet air was caressing to his lungs, and he didn't notice until he was almost to the ground that he was going to land in the exact center of a tremendous bog, at least three miles from any road.

FIVE hours later, under the brilliant stars, he met the searching-party, coming after him. For a moment of alarm, he thought it was Gerro, and he shrank back into the darkness and swamp grass. Then he recognized Dan Gibbs' booming

voice, and re-emerging, showed himself. Dan, it developed, had brought two policemen with him.

"You hiding from that Cuban?" Dan asked.

"That was the general intention," Johnny said, relieved.

"Forget him," Dan said, puffing from exertion. "He made the mistake of telling an Englishman that he was going to bump you off to make sure of that crazy bet of mine. Courtney was a white man, and that was just too much for him. He was Gerro's 'front' trying to buy the circus. I don't remember the details, but they say I wouldn't sell the circus but I bet it on your taking the Benson Trophy go. Why didn't you tell me about this Gerro's threat, kid?"

"I tried to tell you," Johnny said, "but I couldn't find you." Relieved of fear and worry, he suddenly was unendurably exhausted.

"I spent the night with Courtney looking for Gerro—and all the next morning," Dan said. "We found him and we slapped him in the jug. When they get around to it, they'll deport him. Kid, you should have told Gwen, so we could have started to help you sooner. One thing you want to learn is that a woman's going to find out everything about you anyhow, so you'll save a lot of trouble if you just tell her everything in the beginning."

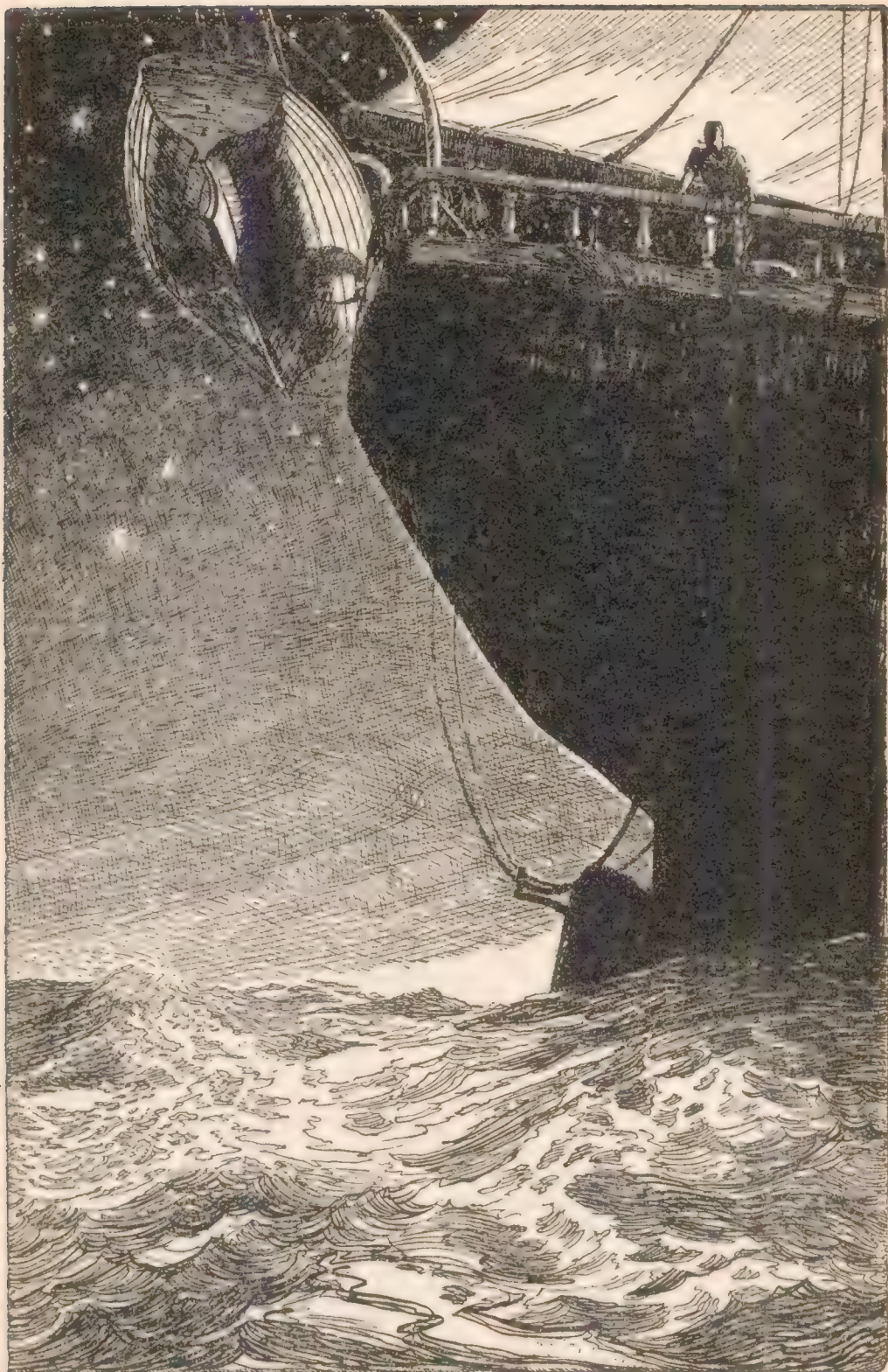
IN the starlight ahead Johnny could see the vague outlines of automobiles against the sky. It was reassuring to know that Gwen was waiting for him there.

"I guess maybe you're right," he said to Dan.

"Sure I'm right," Dan said. "Well, kid, I got sucked in for rebel bait because I got down off the wagon, so I guess I'll get back on again. This time, kid, I really mean it!"

Johnny grinned. He had known Dan Gibbs for ten years. "Sure," he said. This burst of temperance might last a month or six months or even a year. But sooner or later Dan would climb down again, "to try his legs."

When that happened, he might try to buy the White House, or decide he was a Cuban general himself. But it was all right—doing it, he would provide excitement. Dan never did the same thing twice, at any rate. Around Dan, you needn't ever worry about monotony, or about being bored!



Illustrated by Yngve Edward Soderberg

He rested his gaze on the whispering sea and felt that he was met with a vast contentment and acceptance of storm or calm, of lashing rain and the wind's buffeting, a nonchalance undisturbed by the torment of sinking ships and the agony of drowning seamen. Rebuked by this vast placidity, he felt his lust for vengeance soften.

The Wind and the Rain

By CAPTAIN WILLIAM OUTERSON

A memorable story of storm and strife and death—and of the peace of deep water, the serenity of the starlit sky.

THE sky was moonless but clear and bright with stars. A soft wind blew from the southeast and the barque *Ronnyburn* moved stately on her northerly course, her sails barely filled by the summer breeze, the dying breath of the trades. On her silent decks lay the peace of deep water, the old serenity that dwells between sea and sky when the wind is gentle and the night untroubled. Dim in the starlight, her clouds of canvas towered in ghostly forms of power and beauty; and her mastheads like moving fingers traced mystic symbols on the sky. Small waves with whispering crests rolled up on her starboard quarter, breaking against the ship in lines of yeasty foam that ran along her sides and passed ahead, closing their broken ranks. A thin low haze, gray and nebulous and with brighter stars gleaming through it here and there, lay along the skyline to the south. Over in the north a black cloud with tumbled edges rose slowly above the horizon.

Standing at the forward taffrail on the poop Mr. Gurley, the second mate, stared at the dark cloud and wondered if it would bring wind or rain or both. He knew from former experience with such nimbi that when it came a little nearer the present wind would die out and thus would end the trades that had brought them so cheerily over twelve hundred miles of sea. If there was any wind behind that cloud, he thought, it would approach more rapidly, but to make sure of this he went down the companion to the saloon and tapped the barometer with his forefinger. The pointer trembled but did not drop and he returned to the poop without waking the captain, who had left definite orders not to call him unless to report a falling glass. Strolling aft to the wheel, Mr. Gurley glanced at the compass in the starboard binnacle and noted the ship was nearly a point off her course. He spoke sharply to Blackley, the man at the wheel.

"Mind your helm," he ordered curtly. "There's no excuse for letting her fall off in this weather. She steers like a yacht."

Blackley received the rebuke sullenly, hating to be criticized and cursing Mister Gurley in his mind for a damned conceited pup who wouldn't show any friendliness to a seaman, no matter how good a sailor he might be. He may have rested on his wheel when the second mate went below, and the ship had gone off a trifle, but that was no reason why he should be barked at in that fashion.

Mr. Gurley waited there until the ship had been brought on her course again, then returned to the forward taffrail for another survey of the dark cloud, but noting that it was no nearer than before he lost immediate interest in it and let his thoughts run on Blackley. On one or two occasions that man had tried to start a conversation with him in order to gain favor by reporting what went on in the forecabin, but Mr. Gurley hated informers and had repulsed his advances sternly. He disliked Blackley for that and other reasons, chiefly because the big seaman made life extremely hard for Lambert, a little man who had executed what you might call a pierhead jump aboard the *Ronnyburn* to take the place of an absent seaman. Some rascally crimp had no doubt persuaded Lambert to sign on as able seaman, in order to cash his advance note for one month's wages, though he did not know a rope-yarn from a shoelace or the main brace from the topsail halyards. He had been sent away from the wheel for incompetence and disgraced to ordinary seaman on the first day out, and since then Blackley had consistently abused him.

ON his dismissal from the wheel, Lambert's mates had received him in silence when they met in the forecabin during their next watch below; and all but Blackley and Drummond had seemed to sympathize with him, though his defec-

tion gave them an extra trick at the wheel every second day. When he remorsefully offered to stand an extra spell of lookout to balance this they were satisfied and forgot the matter with a little laughter, being easy-going men who had known their own times of trouble. Drummond never became friendly, either with him or the others of the watch. He was a tall gaunt man of great strength, harsh and intolerant by nature and nearly always silent but a first-rate seaman, and he treated Lambert with mute ferocious contempt. To this attitude the ordinary seaman shortly became accustomed and his life in the forecastle might have been peaceful enough, since in that rating he was not required to know much of anything, had not Blackley, a big heavy man who fancied himself in the rôle of forecastle boss, treated him with active and unrelenting malice.

THE second mate noted that the dark cloud on the port bow was rising rapidly and went down to read the glass again. At the tap of his forefinger the pointer flipped down a trifle, not enough to indicate any serious change in the weather but sufficient to justify him in calling the captain. Knocking on his door he reported the falling glass, received a response and returned to the poop where Blackley, leaning forward from the wheel, was striking four chimes on the small bell fixed to the after end of the cabin skylight. A moment later the lookout on the forecastle head repeated the strokes on the ship's bell and as the vibration died away the skipper appeared on the poop and a man came aft to relieve Blackley.

Giving the new man the course, Blackley reported it to the second mate and went forward to the forecastle.

Drummond sat on his sea-chest sewing up a tranverse rent in the left sleeve of his oilskin coat, a garment that had served him through several voyages and was patched in various places but well oiled and still waterproof. Leaning across his bunk Blackley stared at a bundle of clothing lying in the middle of it, picked it up for closer inspection and gave expression to a vicious curse. With the garments in his hand he strode out on deck and went aft to the main hatch where he had seen Lambert sitting as he came forward from the wheel. Halting in front of the little man he held out the bundle, pushing the faintly offensive underwear close to his face.

"I told you to wash them things," he said in a bullying tone.

Lambert rose jerkily to his feet, summoning all his courage.

"Wash your own dirty rags," he retorted heroically. "Who the hell d'you think you are aboard this packet—the skipper?"

Blackley stood motionless, with murder in his heart, staring with the horrified astonishment of the master before a slave in revolt. He could so easily break the neck of the small rebel standing so gallantly before him with head up and eyes burning. But murder was out of the question and the demise of Lambert would rob him of the easy tyranny so dear to his heart; also he feared to start manhandling him on deck, where the second mate might take note and interfere. Therefore he shot out a huge hand, gripped Lambert by the nape of the neck and propelled him forward to the forecastle door. Half lifting him over the high sill, he slapped him heavily on the side of the head and threw him inside, where Lambert sprawled against Drummond, jarring Drummond's sewing arm so that the needle drove deeply into his finger. Fury lay crouched at all times under the harsh surface of Drummond; he rose now swiftly to face Blackley, ignoring Lambert, who had regained his feet and stood at bay in the forward part of the forecastle, resolved to make a last desperate stand against oppression. But he found himself with Sellers, the man just relieved from lookout, a mere spectator in the events that followed.

BLACKLEY halted as he came face to face with Drummond and saw the blaze of anger in his eyes. He felt the false courage empty out of him like the juice of a squeezed orange, but used his customary tactics of bluff and stepped forward with upraised arm to shove Drummond out of the way. Drummond drew a sharp breath and made a queer noise in his throat resembling a short growl, a note of animal ferocity that preceded by a fraction of a second his upward blow. It caught Blackley under the chin with a dull whacking sound, lifted him off his feet and hurled him backward to the deck, where he collapsed and lay prone, afraid to get up and fight. Supreme pleasure glowed in Lambert and his heart warmed toward Drummond, though he knew the blow had been struck in revenge for the pain of the needle and not by any means on his account.

Stooping over his prostrate antagonist, knowing that he was merely shamming a knockout, Drummond slapped his face hard and often to stimulate his courage, a course of treatment that met with small success. Blackley opened his eyes and stared in abasement at Drummond but made no effort to rise until a resonant voice from the poop roared an order to stand by the royal halyards. The dark cloud was now approaching swiftly, the glass was falling and the skipper thought there might be a strong wind coming.

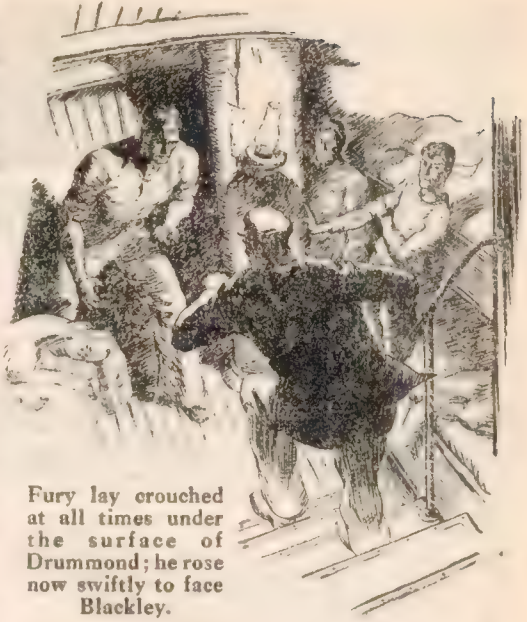
Drummond turned away and hurried into his oilskins; and Blackley, knowing that he was safe from attack while there was work to do on deck, rose to his feet.

"That was a foul blow," he accused in a low frantic voice, seeing all his prestige as bully of the forecabin destroyed. "Besides that, you kept poundin' me when I was down an' out. I'll kill you for that, damn you!"

Drummond paid no attention to this and all four hurried on deck, Lambert and Sellers wondering if Blackley could find courage for an attempt to carry out his threat and suspecting that a treacherous attack in the night would be his only possible method of accomplishing it. Over in the north the black cloud was heaving up the sky and on deck the second mate was cursing the laggards, shouting at them to move lively if they didn't want the masts cracked out of her. They started into swift action and hauled down the staysails, clewed up and furled the royals, then the topgallants, and four men were sent aloft on each mast to tie them up. Drummond was the third man in the fore rigging and Sellers was about to follow him when Blackley thrust him roughly aside and climbed after the man he had threatened to kill.

"Blackley aint often so keen to go aloft," Mr. Gurley remarked with sarcasm.

Four other men went aloft on the mainmast and Lambert was left alone on deck to coil up the ropes and put things in shipshape. Finishing this job in a few minutes, he stood at the rail abaft the fore rigging on the weather side and watched the black cloud rolling up overhead, and the thought came to him that the men on the topgallant yards would not have time to furl the sails before the squall struck. In this he was right, for the wind smote the *Ronnyburn* a minute later and heeled her sharply over, but even Lambert knew there was



Fury lay crouched at all times under the surface of Drummond; he rose now swiftly to face Blackley.

not enough force in it to do her any damage. It was not much stronger than a topgallant breeze, but it caught the loose sails, held only by their lines, and blew them violently outward and upward, bellying and swaying above the yards.

Pleasantly stimulated by the fresh moist wind, Lambert raised his head and listened to the booming sounds from the thrashing topgallants, and as he stood thus there came to his ears a harshly urgent cry of one word in a voice he clearly recognized as Drummond's:

"Blackley!"

It expressed desperate need and pain unbearable, and instantly Lambert surmised that Blackley had found a chance to keep his threat and was trying to throw his shipmate off the yard. The suspicion was agitating his mind when another strident cry came down from the black sky, this time in Blackley's voice:

"Man overboard!"

Lambert had faced about with his back to the weather rail and noticed above the skyline to leeward a narrow band of open sky which the cloud had not yet covered. Against this he saw a wildly sprawling shape, plainly the form of a man, hurtling down past the lee rail into the sea. Blackley seemed to have been prompt in carrying out his threat. How he had accomplished it Lambert did not know, but one thing was clear to him—that whatever private quarrels might exist between sailors they ought to stand together as one against the sea. That was a principle he would not disregard even



From his position on deck Lambert saw a wildly sprawling shape hurtling past the lee rail into the sea. Blackley seemed to have been prompt in carrying out his threat!

fled drums, noise so deep and confusing that the second mate could scarcely hear Lambert's excited report. As soon as the skipper learned that a man had fallen from aloft, he ordered the others down to lower a boat and make an effort to pick him up. They came down with a rush, Blackley the first to reach the deck, and in record time six of them had the handiest boat over the side and were pulling vigorously astern, the second mate at the tiller.

Lambert was left on deck with another man and stood alone in the deluge of rain trying to imagine what had happened on the topgallant yard, the other bloke having sneaked into the forecabin for a smoke. It seemed certain that Blackley had thrown Drummond from the yard and was showing eagerness for his rescue in order to avert suspicion, also to be present if they picked him up and deny any accusation he might make to the second mate. He probably had a lie all arranged to tell in his own defense, or it might be possible that Drummond was dead when he fell from the yard, stabbed to the heart with Blackley's knife.

Lambert could hear the second mate hailing Drummond from the boat, which

if it were Blackley who had fallen—and he rushed aft shouting at the pitch of his voice that a man had gone overboard.

The wind dropped with a moan and a sigh, and the black cloud opened and sent down a drenching flood of rain that beat on the decks with a sound of muf-

had gone some distance astern on the lee side. He crossed the deck and stood peering over the rail but could see nothing in the rainy darkness and listened for an answering cry that might come from Drummond if he were still alive. None came to his ears, and as he waited motionless, impressed but not saddened by the tragedy of the night, the rain stopped as suddenly as it had begun and the sky began to clear. In the growing light from the stars he saw on the topgallant rail in front of him a piece of the sleeve of Drummond's oilskin coat, torn off at the place where he had been sewing it prior to the fight. After making as close an examination as the dim light permitted Lambert saw that the edges of the cloth were ragged and at the hem of the cuff were small marks in the material such as might have been made by a man's fingernails. With a surge of unholy triumph he folded and concealed it under his coat, believing that it would convict Blackley of the murder of Drummond, since it proved there had been a violent struggle on the topgallant yard.

WHEN the boat returned, unsuccessful in its search for the missing seaman, it was hoisted into place and the ship's sails were loosed and set again, the port watch coming on deck at eight bells and helping in the work. When it was finished the skipper ordered the starboard watch to muster aft, where he held an investigation of the circumstances relating to Drummond's fall from aloft, asking Blackley to tell what he knew about it. He was in at the bunt, Blackley said, and Drummond was perhaps six feet farther out on the lee yardarm. When the wind came down and bellied out the sail above the yard something hit Drummond, probably the clew block, which wasn't hauled all the way up, and he cried out to Blackley to help him. Blackley slid along the yard but Drummond couldn't hold on long enough and was just dropping backward when Blackley caught hold of the sleeve of his oilskin coat and for a few seconds held him suspended by it in mid-air. Then it tore off all the way round and Drummond went down. When Blackley had concluded this statement a long silence ensued, finally broken by an accusing voice.

"You swore you was goin' to kill Drummond," Sellers declared.

"I never done no such thing," Blackley denied vehemently.

"Yes, you did," Lambert corroborated. "Me and Sellers both heard you swear it."

"There's another thing, too," Sellers added. "I was goin' aloft behind Drummond, an' you shoved me aside an' went up after him. Mr. Gurley seen you do that; an' so did Lambert."

"That's right," the second mate agreed. "I wondered at the time why you seemed so anxious to be on the yard with Drummond and I said something about it."

"Let's have the whole story from the beginning," the skipper ordered.

Sellers told it, from the time when Blackley flung Lambert into the fore-castle until the order came to stand by the royal halyards.

"It looks to me like a plain case of murder," said the captain to Blackley. "What happened to the piece of sleeve that you say tore off?"

"I don't know, sir," answered the white-faced Blackley. "I aint got it. When Drummond fell out o' my grip I nearly lost my balance an' dropped the sleeve to save myself. It mebbe fell on deck somewhere, sir."

"All hands go out on deck and look for that piece of sleeve," said the skipper. "Bring it to me the moment you find it."

The sleeve, which Lambert kept concealed under his coat, resolved not to give it up now that it appeared as the only piece of evidence in Blackley's favor, could not of course be found, and Blackley was put in irons and confined in an empty room in the after deck house to be handed over to the New York police and tried for murder.

"A jury will convict you without leaving the courtroom," the skipper declared sternly. "There's not a gap in the evidence, though I admit it's entirely circumstantial."

"I never done it, sir. I swear to God I never done it," cried Blackley in a voice hysterical with fear, all his bluff departed and wild terror glaring from his eyes. Staring at him, his watchmates wondered why they had let him boss the fore-castle all these past weeks. He had no guts at all.

LAMBERT went below with the other men; he lay down, but could not sleep. Rising at one bell he lit his pipe and stepped out on deck, went aft to the stern and leaned on the rail, gazing dreamily at the wide space of sky, now clear of the dark cloud, and the sea rippled by the new breeze from the

northwest. He felt a novel and deeply cherished sense of power, as if he had become the master and judge of Blackley, the man who had abused and bullied him since the day of their departure from Capetown. If this piece of oilskin sleeve was the one potent rag of evidence that would save Blackley from the chair, would he produce it? No, by God, he would not! It gave him the biggest kick of his life to think of Blackley being strapped into the electric chair, there to sit until they had burned the life out of him. A hot glow of slave's triumph expanded the heart of Lambert as he remembered Blackley's blows and curses, his malicious contempt and vicious cruelty. The big bully would pay for all that.

A SENSE of triumphant vengeance gripped and glorified him, gave him the feeling that fate had stepped in to right his wrongs, caused him to feel an immense expansion of personality. He seemed to himself to possess the strength of a giant whose enemy had been struck down, as if by his own hand, by circumstances for which he was directly responsible—a conception strengthened and confirmed by the fact of his finding the torn sleeve which, if he had produced it during the skipper's investigation, might have convinced him that Blackley's story was true.

Lambert chuckled; that piece of evidence would be sinking in the sea before he went below again—to turn in and drift into peaceful sleep, clear and untroubled now that his tyrant was chained in the brig. Controlled laughter issued from him and he cast his glance toward the stars as if to invite them to share his merriment, to stir them out of their remote serenity and allow them to rejoice with him and wink their approval in the downfall of his enemy.

They failed to respond to his mood, remaining far off, aloof and indifferent, and beneath their majestic unconcern his self-gratulations were somewhat cooled. His eyes sought separate stars and lingered on them while he wondered about their nature and purpose, remembering what he had read about the skies, that millions of giant universes lay beyond his farthest vision, stretching into illimitable space. Returning to nearer things he rested his gaze on the whispering sea and felt that here also he was met with complete indifference, by a vast contentment and free acceptance of storm or calm, of lashing rain and the wind's

buffeting, the soft caress of the stars and the burning ardor of the sun, a nonchalance undisturbed by the torment of sinking ships and the agony of drowning seamen. Rebuked by this vast placidity, he felt his savage triumph diminish and his lust for vengeance soften to pensive melancholy. In the midst of such immensities he gradually saw himself as a mere fragment, a mote invisible, less than a grain of sand.

Chastened, he stared at his hands on the rail; and by the magic of thought they seemed to grow smaller until his fascinated gaze observed them as no larger than pinpoints. His body appeared to dwindle down to minute dimensions, until he felt himself equal in size to a rat and finally no bigger than a louse. What did the universe care about his triumphs and defeats or about anything? The massive earth might explode like a bomb and cause no more than a ripple, less than these little waves on the sea whipped by the breeze that pushed the ship along. Only the earth might feel its own destruction if it burst in a red mist beyond the orbit of Pluto, and he as one of its parasites would go out in a spark like a little grain of powder. Himself alone could feel his own meager triumph, his paltry resentment and insignificant vengeance. To the universe rolling along on its gigantic course the final catastrophe of the whole solar system would amount to nearly nothing.

HAVING thus sounded the deepest regions of his self-esteem, his spirit rebelled and asserted itself to raise him again, bringing him back to man-size and beyond, expanding until he enveloped the ship and the sea and spread outward to the unseen moon and the stars, growing without effort in a soaring flight infinitely more swift than light, until he felt himself encompassing the billion nebulae, centered in all of them and containing them within himself. In this transcendent state, he knew that the essence of man is the essence of all things, and in serene wisdom he asked himself why he should trouble about the little annoyances of earth, the aimless strivings, the futile victories and the ironic defeats.

Why worry, then, over the blind frustrations of circumstance, the wind and the rain, a coward's tyranny? His mood of serenity deepened, settling itself within him, and a new laughter tickled his vitals. A faint arch of light, soft herald

of the dawn, grew brighter on the eastern skyline. Two bells sounded. . . .

The skipper sat at the saloon table drinking coffee and agreed with some surprise to see Lambert, who was shown in by the steward.

"I found this on the rail, sir, behind the coil of the fore brace," he announced, holding out the piece of sleeve torn from Drummond's oilskin coat.

THE skipper took it and examined it thoughtfully.

"This is the sleeve that Blackley was talking about?" he inquired.

"Yes sir," Lambert answered. "May I talk, sir?"

"Yes, if you have something to say."

"I'd like to tell you about Blackley, sir, if you wouldn't mind: There's some things that wasn't told last night. It's like this, sir. Blackley's a coward and a bluffer. The threat that he made to kill Drummond was just bluff, sir. He aint got the guts to kill anybody, and he was dead scared of Drummond; and Drummond was warned an' ready for him. If Blackley had attacked him on the yard, he'd have throwed him halfway across the Atlantic, and Blackley knowed that very well, sir."

"He might have taken Drummond by surprise on the yard," the skipper argued.

"Not when he was warned an' ready for him, sir. Drummond could take care of hisself as well as any man alive, an' Blackley knowed it."

"Yes, I suppose he could. I've heard he was a very strong man."

"Awful strong, sir. I've saw him do things you wouldn't believe. But about Blackley, sir, when he made that play at the fore riggin', shovin' Sellers aside so's he could be on the yard with Drummond: That was all bluff, sir. He did that to make me an' Sellers think he wasn't scared, an' that was all he meant."

"You're sure of that?" The skipper wanted nothing but facts.

"Yes sir. I'm dead sure, an' so is Sellers. We saw how Blackley lay down to Drummond in the fo'c'stle, an' if he wouldn't fight there, he wouldn't fight on the t'gallant yard. Stands to reason, sir."

"Yes," the skipper admitted. "It's reasonable enough."

"When Drummond sang out that time, sir, he must have been hurt awful bad. He was a quiet man, fierce as a wolf, an' never opened his mouth to nobody. If



"I found this on the rail, sir, behind the coil of the fore brace," said Lambert.

Blackley had attacked him, he'd just have growled; so he must have needed help awful bad, sir, to call on Blackley for it."

"I'm glad to know that," said the skipper. "I couldn't quite understand that cry, but now I see it may have been as Blackley said—a call for help."

"Yes sir. I was standin' at the rail when Drummond fell, an' there was a little bit of sky over to loo'ard that wasn't covered by the black cloud. I saw Drummond fall past the light of the stars; an' the very same second, I heard Blackley sing out from aloft, '*Man overboard.*' A guilty man wouldn't have done that, sir. He would wait a few seconds, anyhow. An' Blackley was the first man down from aloft to get the boat overside. If he was guilty, he'd hang back."

"More than likely, yes."

"Then there's the sleeve, sir. Them marks on the edge was made by Blackley's fingernails while he was holdin' Drummond up by it. I've been thinkin' about that sleeve, sir; an' I don't see no possible way it could have torn clear across like that, except the way Blackley said it did, with Drummond's weight hangin' on it."

LAMBERT ceased talking and gazed calmly at the skipper, who surveyed him curiously.

"The sleeve is a good piece of evidence, Lambert," he said quietly. "I wouldn't have put Blackley in irons if this had been found in time; and the points you have mentioned have just

about convinced me that he is innocent. You've made out a very good case for him. Why have you gone to all this trouble? I'm told he has treated you badly."

"Yes sir," Lambert answered, smiling. "I hated his guts. I'd have liked to see him burn out his lousy heart in the chair. But it don't matter now. He won't bother me no more, sir."

"No," the skipper agreed. "I'm convinced he'll give you no more trouble after this. On your way for'ard tell the carpenter I want to see him. I'll have Blackley's irons struck off immediately."

"Yes sir," said Lambert. "Thank you kindly, sir."

He went forward along the smiling deck, radiant under the beams of the newly risen sun, and the overflow from the mainsail caressed his neck and shoulders as he passed beneath it. The breeze murmured in the rigging and played against his face pleasantly as he stopped at the main hatch, where Chips was drinking his coffee, to tell him the skipper wanted to see him. In the forecandle he felt a new friendship for his mates, emotionless but clear and enduring, and lay down in his bunk with a deep luxurious sigh.

Blackley came in a few minutes later.

"It's just as well for you that you handed in that piece of torn sleeve," he declared with a foolish attempt to assert his old dominance, unaffected by any thought of gratitude toward the man who had cleared him.

"Pipe down," said Lambert calmly.

"What's that?" Blackley demanded, threatening but uncertain.

Lambert rose on his elbow and looked at him with cool smiling eyes.

"Listen, Blackley: You're through. I didn't save your lousy life to let you keep me awake in my watch below. Get me? Now, pipe down."

He lowered his head to the pillow and closed his eyes.

Nobody knows what impulses raged in the heart of Blackley as he stared down at the serene face of his former victim; but whatever they were, he gave them no expression, turning silently away and rolling into his bunk. Lambert lay awake a few minutes while casual images drifted through his mind: Drummond, and the wind in the black cloud, the stars, the torn sleeve and the dawn, the skipper and the rain. . . . Inward laughter shook him gently as he fell asleep.

ARMS

"The Inca Speaks" deals with the coming of gunpowder to South America—one of the most tragic stories in all the blood-stained record of the weapons by which men have won their way.

MY old friend Martin Burnside, usually so brisk and chipper, greeted me without his customary smile. His eyes, behind their spectacles, were lacking in their wonted fire. Sunk in gloomy abstraction, he would scarcely speak to me.

I sought the reason in vain. Martin had no family to worry about; he had no lack of money; scandal and litigation were far from him. His sole pursuit was the collection and study of arms and armor. In this he was totally wrapped up.

"Must be your liver," I observed, baffled by his despondency.

"No," he grunted. "Heart."

"Heart?" I echoed in alarm. "You mean—an attack?"

"Don't be a damned fool!" he shot at me. "You know who invented pistols?"

"It's no secret, is it? Vitelli, of Pistoia in Italy—whence the name. He flourished around 1540; probably brought out his first pistols much earlier, of course."

"Naturally," said Martin Burnside. He roused a little from his gloom. "You know, it makes me heart-sick to think of some of the things men have done—men and weapons. A weapon is a good clean thing in the first place. But the evil of man prostitutes it to ignoble uses and deeds—"

"Or the nobility of man uplifts it to honorable causes," I struck in.

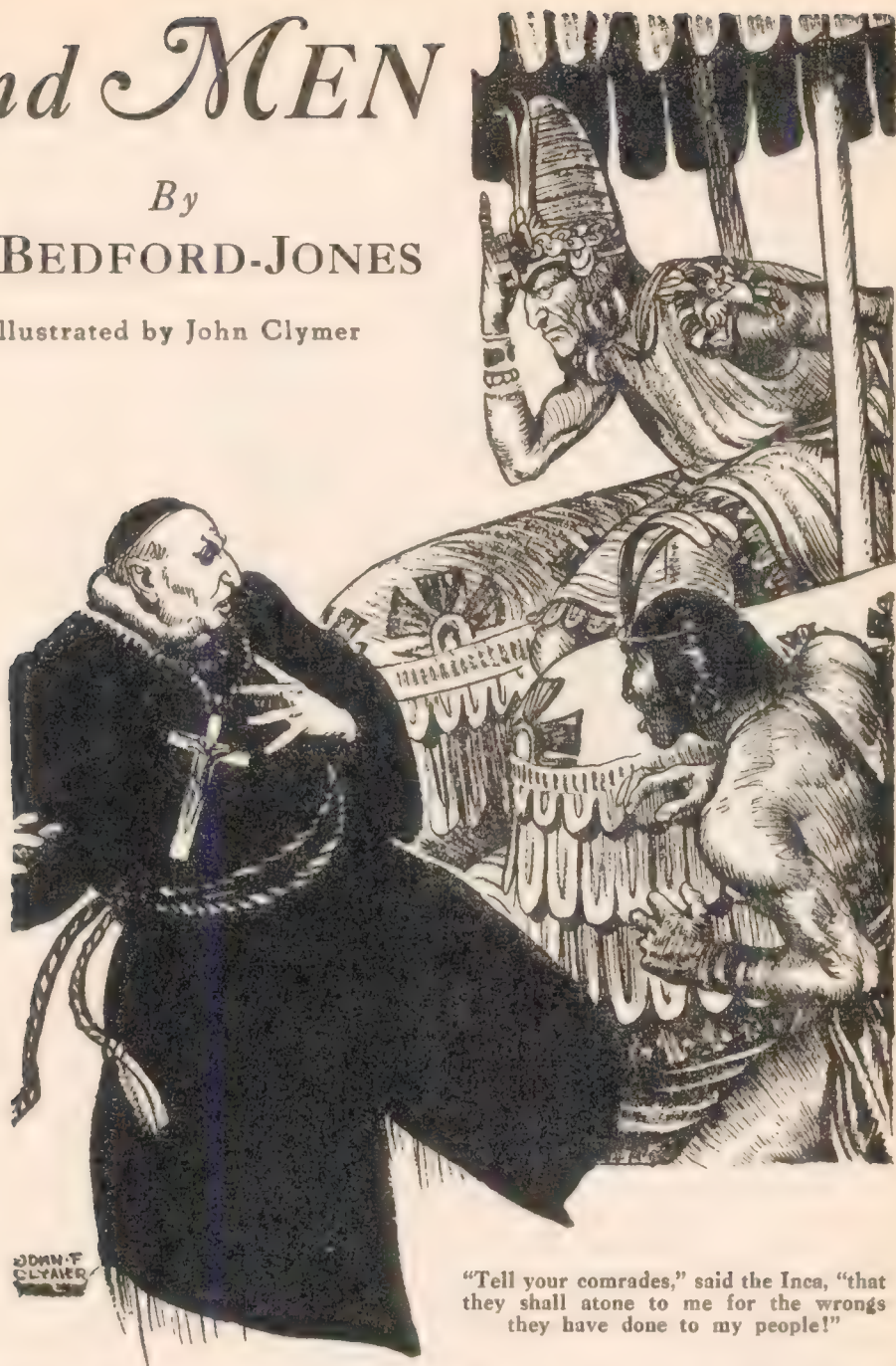
He nodded. "True. Yet the fascination lies in evil, all too often. Sometimes some object turns up, so steeped in historical and personal association, so imbued in the vile doings of mankind, that it seems to have taken on a malign character of its own. Auto-hypnosis, Hyslop called it, and gave me a prescription. Damn psychiatrists and prescriptions both!"

and MEN

By

H. BEDFORD-JONES

Illustrated by John Clymer



"Tell your comrades," said the Inca, "that they shall atone to me for the wrongs they have done to my people!"

So Martin Burnside had been to a psychiatrist! He must indeed be in bad shape.

"Have you any definite object in mind?" I asked cautiously. Martin gave me one sharp look, guffawed, and reached for his pipe.

"I'm not crazy, you idiot!" he exclaimed.

And when he had leisurely stuffed and lighted the pipe, he pulled open a drawer of his desk, took out a cloth-wrapped

object, and laid aside the cloth to disclose the rust-eaten remnants of a very old pistol.

"Early Italian or Spanish, eh?" I commented. "You have better ones in the collection—two, I believe, made by Vitelli himself."

"So was this, probably," he said with a nod. "Beastly condition. And yet this pistol, my boy, is one that heard the Inca speak."

I frowned. "The Inca? Which one?"



Pizarro, the illegitimate Spanish soldier whose iron will to power trampled down friends, scruples, chivalry and every human decency—the perfect example of Nietzsche's superman!"

Still thinking that poor Burnside must be a little touched in the head, I took the relic home, read up on the subject, studied the accursed thing. . . .

"Here"—Pizarro tapped the pistol—"is my miracle!"

"The last real one. You know: Pizarro knocked around quite a bit, discovered Peru, then went back to Spain for authority to conquer it—which he did in 1532. He no doubt got this pistol then."

"Eh? You don't mean this belonged to him?"

Martin Burnside nodded, and eyed the old weapon sardonically.

"Yes—according to legend, at least. It's been preserved in a church down in Peru, and got looted, among other things, during the late troubles there. Now it's come to me. You remember how Peru was conquered?"

"Vaguely; I seem to recall it submitted almost without a fight. What do you mean by saying that the Inca spoke?"

"Look it up." Martin Burnside wrapped the relic again and shoved it at me. "You can make a story of it—then you'll comprehend my remarks. And if I'm not mistaken, you'll understand why a weapon, like a dog or a horse, shares the character of its owner. This one does, on my word. But don't omit anything, mind you! Tell the truth about

Accursed? I call it that advisedly, in writing these lines. To my own horrified surprise—perhaps it was the result of Martin's words—I began to see something malefic about that rusted mass of corrosion. Its queer angles had a malevolent aspect. Its very corruption seemed to speak of virulent strength. As it lay there before me, through the pipe-smoke whorls it assumed queer fantastic shapes, as happens upon a half-focused gaze.

The gray smoke eddied about it. The broken, cracked, browned ivory ball of the round butt looked like bronzed white skin, half hidden by grizzled grayish beard. A point of brass, scraped bare of corrosion, caught the light with a glitter, like the glitter of an eye.

The face grew upon my fancy, and the man—a man of fifty years, furrowed and worn. Yet what a face! Unspeakably hard, with pointed jaw under the beard, thin grim lips devoid of passion, skin drawn tightly over the high cheekbones. Eyes that drooped to the corners, sign of shrewdness, with white of

ball visible between lower lid and pupils in token of ruthless, cruel will. Eyes steady, implacable, thrusting forward with the undeviating, inhuman will-power of the brain behind them.

Under the torn cloak with its cross of the order of St. Jago, close-wrapped for warmth, glittered armor. Hands outspread to the fire that had been kindled on the bare stone floor; powerful, browned hairy hands with square knotty fingers. Walls of stone all around, bare hewn stone, a glitter of cold stars visible at the openings.

PIZARRO stared out upon the square where his men were encamped. Over the Andes he had led them. Yesterday he had camped here in the empty, deserted city of Caxamalca, the fabled land of Peru gained at last without a fight, without a struggle save against nature. And yonder along the hillsides the host of the Inca himself, the Child of the Sun, coming to visit and welcome the white strangers on the morrow.

Firelight flickered along the square. Spanish voices resounded there; a hundred and seventy-seven, no more. The brooding man thought of Cortez in Mexico, barely managing to conquer that land of Indians with his hundreds, his artillery, his months of constant battle, reinforcement, defeat, struggle to the death. And here, a hundred and seventy-seven men, two tiny falconets unworthy the name of cannon, a few arquebuses, twenty crossbows—across the Andes from help or succor, with a good thirty thousand fierce Peruvian warriors camped along the hillsides opposite.

"Guard!" The voice of Pizarro crackled out, dry, harsh, absolute. "Summon my brother Don Hernando, with Don Fernando de Soto and all the other officers. Hither."

This day a few horsemen had visited the Inca's camp, with the malicious little liar of a native youth who served as interpreter. Hernando Pizarro—legitimate, he, ugly and scarred, stalwart, a very *Iago* at provoking ill-will—and De Soto had ridden with these horsemen, had met the silent Inca face to face, had returned with his promise to dine with the Spaniards on the morrow. He and his chief nobles, all of the supreme Inca race, would come, guests in their own city, welcoming the strangers who had arrived here without striking a blow.

They trooped in, the gaunt, emaciated captains, chilled with the keen breath

from the Andes. De Soto, youngest of them all, scarcely thirty-five, handsome, eager-eyed; with him the dour Hernando Pizarro, whose heavy-lidded gaze gleamed with envy and somber distrust.

"Well, good brother," he said with covert sneer, "I hear you've been among the men, heartening them with stout words and high assurances."

Pizarro eyed his brother speculatively. Then he nodded.

"They needed it. And you?"

"*Por Dios!* I also, perhaps." Don Hernando laughed harshly. "It seems that we've been a trifle rash, marching on here. We might have waited for Almagro and more men to join us, as I fancy Cortez would have done."

"We might. Cortez would." The thin lip of Pizarro curled with scorn. "Thank God, I am not Cortez! —Be seated, señores. You have dined? Good. Don Fernando, have you changed your mind about the Indian host yonder?"

De Soto drew his cloak closer, and shook his head. He had seen more of Indian fighting and exploration than any man here, save the leader himself.

"Not I, Don Francisco," came his bluff, soldierly reply. "Their numbers are past belief. Their discipline, their spirit, is amazing. Above all, that silent, menacing Atahualpa, that Inca lord of theirs, is a man of tremendous ability and intelligence."

"But friendly," said Pizarro thoughtfully.

De Soto shrugged.

"So he pretends. If so, for how long? These people think we're supernatural. They find the horses strange. Within a few days, perhaps, they'll lose their awe of us. And that proud Inca has no awe—mark me well!"

"Suppose we occupy this city and await Almagro?"

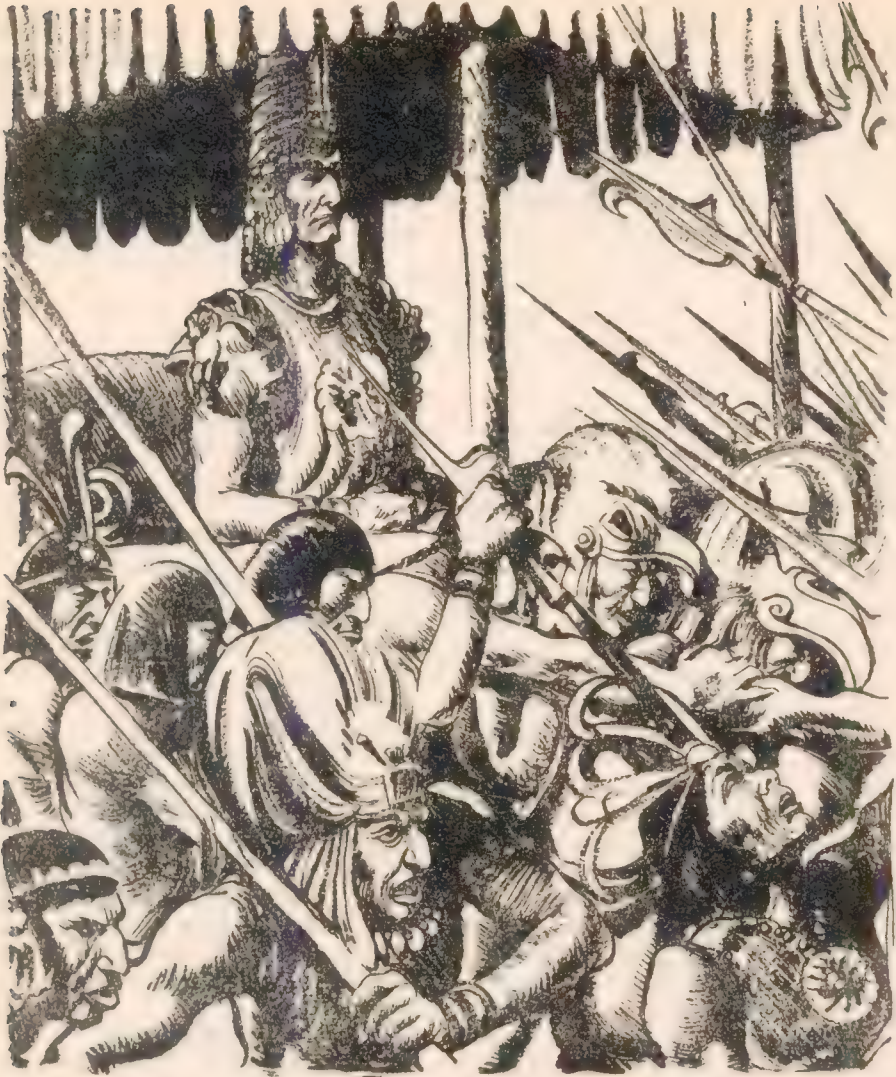
De Soto frowned. "Impossible. Most of the Inca's army is away; they've been conquering regions in the south, and are expected back daily. Think what that would mean, in case of trouble!"

"Then you advise retreat?"

"Retreat?" A flush mounted the bearded cheeks. "No! That were more perilous than aught else. I scarce know what to advise."

AND you?" Pizarro looked at another of the officers. He went from man to man with his steely eyes.

There was no retreat. They had plundered far and wide on the way here;



one move to withdraw, one sign of weakness, and the Inca's host would be upon them. More legions would be here within a few days. To retreat—to stand their ground—to begin any hostilities: one way of destruction was as certain as another.

"So you have no plan?" said Pizarro calmly. "What, brother? No advice?"

Hernando eyed his illegitimate brother shrewdly.

"Aye," said he, with a slow smile. "To follow your own counsel, Francisco; for I think you have a plan, if we've none."

"I have," said Pizarro, and sat silent for a little, while they watched him. At length he roused.

"We must have conquest, not safety," he said. No hesitation; his words were positive, every one of them a hammer-

blow. "We must deepen the awe in which these heathen hold us, into absolute terror. No compromise! We must teach these dogs at one stroke that we are their masters. And with the same stroke, paralyze their whole military force."

De Soto laughed a little incredulously.

"A magnificent consummation, truly! But even with the saints to aid us, I have some doubt about our success if we attack them. Besides, the Inca is the head of all authority in this Indian empire. We'd never be able to kill or secure him."

"Undoubtedly," and Pizarro's voice was dry. "I don't want to kill him—another would merely take his place. I don't want to attack them; we would win, but at fearful cost; and in a week's time another of their armies would be

upon us. Remember Cortez. Profit by his errors. He blundered through, but I don't propose to blunder."

"Then," suggested some one, "you must have a miracle to work."

"I have," said Pizarro, this man who never smiled except where other men saw no cause for mirth. His will struck out at them across the firelight. The iron, absolute strength of him hammered at them.

"Our arquebuses, our falconets, our pistols,"—he touched his belt—"have not been used. We've not had to fight, thus far. Our swords and lances have tasted no blood, since we left the coast. You all know the effect of guns and powder

on these heathen dogs. You can imagine what the effect will be upon these people here."

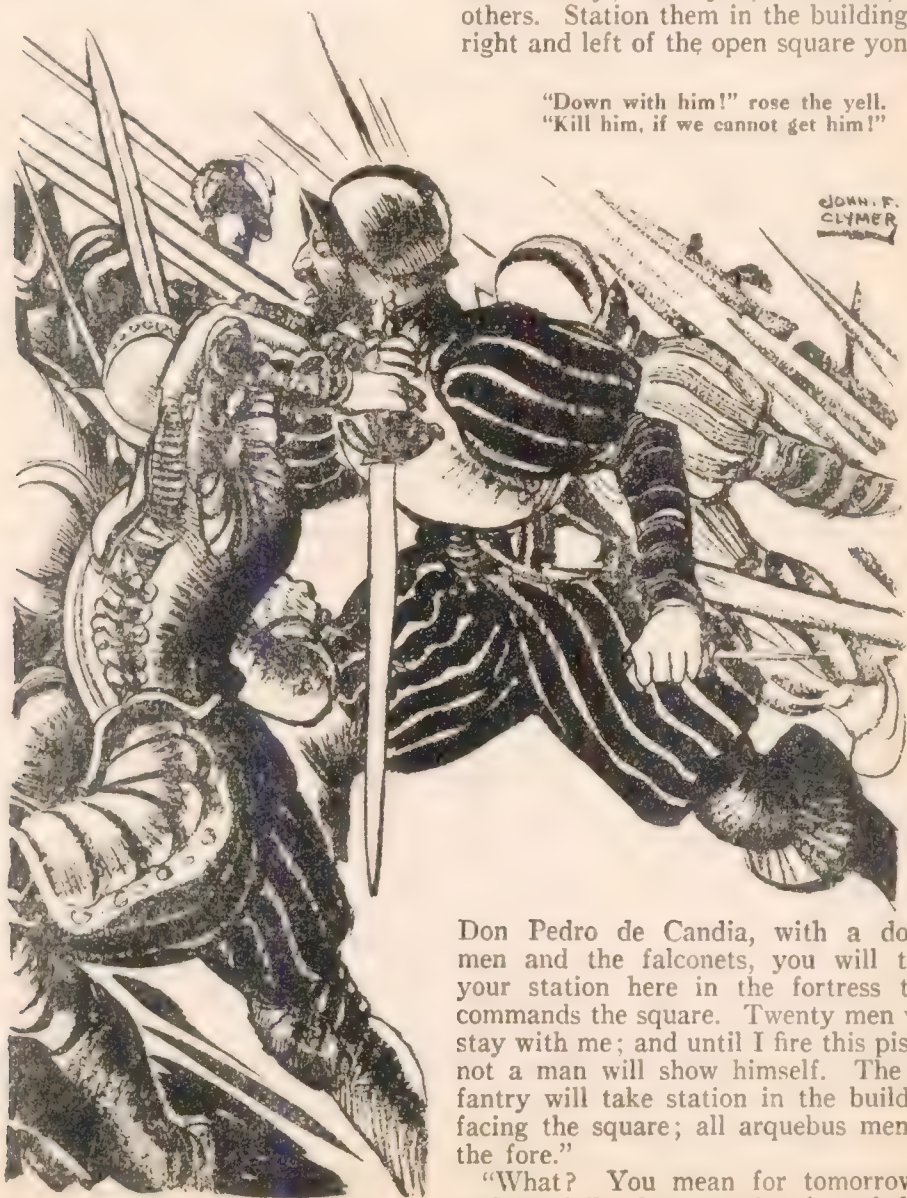
He paused. His fingers drew out his pistol. He turned it over and over in his hand, eying it. One man glanced at another; grimaces were exchanged.

"Cortez had real cannon," said one old veteran dubiously.

Pizarro's head jerked up. A flicker of cruel flame lifted in his eyes.

"Once more I say that I am not Cortez," stabbed his impassive voice. "God save me from being such a fool! Here"—he tapped the pistol—"is my miracle. And my plan is of the simplest: You, good brother, will command half the cavalry; and you, De Soto, the others. Station them in the buildings to right and left of the open square yonder.

"Down with him!" rose the yell.
"Kill him, if we cannot get him!"



Don Pedro de Candia, with a dozen men and the falconets, you will take your station here in the fortress that commands the square. Twenty men will stay with me; and until I fire this pistol, not a man will show himself. The infantry will take station in the building facing the square; all arquebus men to the fore."

"What? You mean for tomorrow?" exclaimed De Soto, staring in unbelief.

"But the Inca and his nobles are not coming to fight! He even assured us that no troops would come, that his nobles would be unarmed. He's supreme here in his own country, in perfect security—he has no thought of attacking us!"

"No?" A grim, thin smile touched the lips of Pizarro. "But I have the thought of attacking *him*."

So he told them his plan.

WHEN his voice had ceased, there was silence. They stared at him, appraisingly, eyes horrified, startled or angry. The flames of the fire crackled. A chorus of laughter at some uncouth jest drifted up from the soldiers' fires.

"Before God!" burst out De Soto. "It would be black treachery!"

Pizarro's eyes touched him coldly.

"It fulfills all the conditions of success." The words held finality. Success or failure; no other argument.

Crafty Hernando Pizarro read the eyes, and spoke softly.

"No *caballero* could accept such a plan, brother."

"Then suggest a better," said Pizarro dryly. "You are not a *caballero*—you are a man fronting death. Consider the fact. The army obeys me. Come! Present a better plan, one that fulfills all the conditions, and I'll adopt it."

Not bad strategy here—Hernando speaking for De Soto and any others who were shocked by the suggestion. It avoided personal recriminations.

"Call in Fray Valverde," spoke up a voice. "If he assents—"

Pizarro leaned back.

"Am I taking orders from a priest—or from you?" His voice was tensed, menacing with restraint. "Let the friar look to his own business. Do you the same. I'll look to mine. I'm not asking your opinions; I'm giving orders. We use the miracle of gunpowder to its fullest extent, and cut down every noble we can reach. By wiping out the whole ruling class, if possible, and capturing the Inca, we win everything at a blow. But first, whip the men into an ecstasy of religious fervor. We fight for the Cross—and if Fray Valverde is winning an entire nation, he'll comprehend the necessity for the method used."

YET aside from this one man of dominant will and inflexible purpose, hypocrisy had no place in the make-up of these *conquistadores*. When, with

the morning, their religious ardor was whipped to fanatic heights by solemnities and chants, sermons and masses, it was a very real thing.

Theirs was the long heritage of perpetual warfare against the Moor. Deeply inbred was their frenetic belief in the cause of the Cross. Men who serve any such cause with their whole heart and soul, whether it be the Cross, the Crescent or the Hammer and Sickle, serve it with a frightful concentration which destroys an entire civilization without a qualm, sensing only the law and the yapping chorus of the wolf-pack. The entire history of nations, of the world at large, is the story of the pack which destroys in the name of progress, beating civilization into chaos. And yet, oddly enough, civilization emerges victor in the end. For the Cause, whether it be Communism or Napoleonic fantasy, vents its savagery and rolls back shattered before the gentler but more terrible racial urge of the soul that aspires. Only the soul is constructive.

SINCE daybreak the men had been mustered. Hours passed while they waited at their posts around the plaza, which was walled in except for the openings into the buildings. A plaza, says one chronicler, greater than the greatest in Spain. Then the sentinels announced a messenger.

The interpreter was called forth. Atahualpa sent word that, since the Spaniards had come fully armed to his camp the previous day, he would bring his army with him in the same condition. Pizarro hesitated not, but sent back word that the Inca might come as he wished; he would, in any case, be received as a friend and brother.

So he came. An enormous stone causeway ran from the town to the hill-sides where Atahualpa was camped. He and his throngs of nobles came by this, his legions spreading out over the fields, far as the eye could reach. Atahualpa himself, throned in massy gold upon a shaded litter, was borne by his chief nobles. Those of Inca blood were to be known by their large ear-rings and adornments of gold. They blazed in the sunlight as they came, a blaze of gold and huge emeralds, a blaze of gold and silver staffs and maces of honor.

Half a mile from the city entrance, the cavalcade halted, and a messenger brought word that the Inca would not enter the town until next day. Pizarro



"You may confide in me," said Pizarro. The Inca met the thrust of those deeply cruel eyes, of the iron will behind them—and held his peace.

bit his lip. Before the sight of that enormous army filling the whole horizon, his men would lose their fanatic fervor. He sent back word, then, that all was prepared for the entertainment of Atahualpa and his nobles, as indeed it was; and that he expected them to dine with him that night.

The Inca struck his half-raised tents, and came on, bidding his army to stay encamped until the morning.

The vast human wave flowed on—first companies of men sweeping the causeway and singing hymns to the Child of the Sun—the last ever to be sung in Peru. The sun was close to the horizon when the first of them entered the city gates and flooded into that enormous plaza. Companies of nobles followed, some in gay costume, others in purest white, many bearing copper and silver maces and ornaments of honor.

Then the Inca, Atahualpa, enthroned in gold, riding on a litter high above the others. In purest blue were his immediate nobles, decked with a profusion of gold, the litter itself lined with glittering plates of silver and gold. A grave and dignified man, of intolerant pride, an emperor more absolute than Charles of Spain. When his palanquin drew near, those who had entered the plaza fell back to either side. Their discipline was admirable.

The litter was carried forward and set down. Atahualpa waited. Some thou-

sands of his nobles were filling the plaza, pressing forward in ordered ranks. The Inca looked around, frowned, and directed a puzzled inquiry at the nearest nobles. Not a Spaniard was to be seen.

Suddenly Fray Valverde came forward with the interpreter, a crucifix in one hand, breviary in the other, and fervently harangued the astonished Inca on the beauties of the Christian faith and the supremacy of Spain. He finished with a curt command to resign his power, abjure his faith, and accept Charles the Fifth as his overlord.

ATAHUALPA said no word. His amazement passed into resentment; his dark features drew into a frown, but he held his peace until the fervid speech was finished. Then his eyes struck angrily at the friar.

"I am the tributary of no man," he exclaimed. "By what authority do you say such things?"

Fray Valverde pointed to the book. The Inca took it, turned it over, stared at it, then impatiently threw it aside.

"Nonsense! Tell your comrades that they shall atone to me for the wrongs they have done to my people."

Valverde picked up the book, in sudden terror tucked his robe about him, and ran for the opening into the barrack-like structure where Pizarro waited. The latter stepped forward, waved a white scarf, and drawing his pistol, fired it.

From the fortress above the gate, the two falconets crashed out loads of bullets into the serried throngs below, and were swiftly reloaded. The arquebuses roared flame and death. Powder-smoke rolled down and around. Again the falconets thundered their deathly charge.

"Santiago! St. Jago!"

The Spaniards poured forth, horse and foot, hurling themselves into the midst of the unarmed nobles, trampling them, putting them to the sword, while the reverberations of falconet and arquebus, pouring a hail of lead upon those near the gates, rolled in monstrous echoes from the buildings around.

Volley upon volley, strewing the dead in such heaps that the gateway was closed, while in the plaza sword and lance plied their fearful work. Under the pressure of this assault, under the incredible weight of their own serried ranks, those nearest the surrounding wall were crushed against it. The wall itself trembled, then shook and gave way, falling for the length of a hundred paces under the sheer mass of shrieking humanity.

By this point of egress, some escaped, with the Spanish cavaliers in hot pursuit.

Within the square, about the throne of Atahualpa, whose bearers had lifted it in vain hope to escape, were now jammed and packed a solid mass of nobles. Arquebus and falconet still thundered, that the tale of gunpowder might spread abroad to bring mad terror to all Peruvian hearts; but here sword and pistol and dagger were striving to carve a way to the person of the Inca.

SO solid, so massed was that human throng, that to reach him was impossible. The brown men, unarmed, helpless, tried vainly to drag down the armored Spaniards. They could but die; and as they sank away, others were jammed into their places until arms were weary of slaughter. And still the Inca remained on the golden throne as the litter rocked; nor could any Spaniard reach him. And darkness was drawing down, and the serried ranks of nobles drew ever closer about their lord.

"Down with him! Kill him, if we cannot get him!" rose the yell. Lances were thrust up; swords flourished toward the Inca. Pizarro leaped forward with stern voice piercing the screams of dying victims. He was not to be cheated by his own men—he thrust at them, caught a sword-slash on the hand: the only hurt

received by any Spaniard on this day of slaughter.

Pizarro and his chosen bodyguard were now nearing the litter, putting to sword and pistol those devoted brown men who thrust forward with frantic devotion and helpless hands. Atahualpa seemed paralyzed. Had he torn from his head the silken emblem of authority, the emeralds from his breast, the golden ornaments from his costume—had he leaped forth among his nobles, he might still have escaped, or have died unrecognized in the mass. But he did not.

Forward and ever forward thrust the Spaniards. Forward against them, ever more desperately, rolled the unarmed nobles, trying to force them back by sheer weight. The Spaniards mounted upon corpses as they slew. Dead and dying were trampled and trampled, so that the wide square within its walls became a wine-press of horror, a sea of blood, upon which darkness was rapidly closing down.

CLOSER now—Pizarro himself joined in the butcher's work. The litter rocked and reeled. A noble supporting it was cut down. Another. The litter lurched wildly. The great mass of the golden throne was displaced, toppled upon the brown men around; the shrill screaming was intensified. Atahualpa lost balance; the litter sagged, and he pitched sideways.

Pizarro and two other Spaniards caught him, broke his fall, bore him down and fell upon him with their armored weight. One Miguel Estete snatched off his silken diadem and waved it jubilantly. A wail of horror and desolation arose from the massed Indians; then they broke, offering no more resistance, turning only to flight.

The Spaniards burst upon them like wolves upon sheep, cutting them down as they fled, pursuing them beyond the walls, killing senselessly, butchering to right and left. The fall of Atahualpa was screamed onward. The hovering army took to flight. Horse and foot, the Spaniards slew and slew until arms could lift weapon no more, until the trumpet in the city called them back to darkness and flickering cressets, and to plunder incredible, beyond belief.

Scarcely forty-five minutes had passed since the first shot was fired. But throughout Peru ran the story of flame and thunder and unseen death from the hands of the white men. And with it,

terror of the gods who provided such weapons.

In Caxamalca, however, there was gold to assail whatever shame found lingering place in Spanish hearts. And with the gold went slaves and women, so that the rudest soldier had a retinue like any duke. For the Indians, acknowledging no authority save that of the Inca, gave themselves to him and to his captors right gladly.

And that night, Atahualpa did dine with Pizarro—the most absolute of emperors and gods, with the unlawful son of a wandering mercenary. The table was set in view of the great plaza, slippery with blackened blood and waist-high in places with stripped corpses.

Here the Child of the Sun, stunned with what had befallen him, sat side by side with Pizarro, his bloodshot eyes gazing at the fierce dark faces, and the darker and fiercer face of the man who had conquered him, and now chided him for having insulted the sacred volume.

"But you may confide in me," went on Pizarro. "The Spaniards are a generous folk, who war only on those who take up arms against them, and pardon all who submit!"

A fleeting, thin-lipped smile, brief and menacing as a flash of lightning, lit up that intolerant and uncompromising visage as the interpreter translated the words to Atahualpa. The Inca gazed on that face so close to his, met the thrust of those deeply cruel eyes, the greater thrust of the iron will behind them; and held his peace. Once too often had he spoken, this day.

ON another day, too, he held his peace; when Pizarro had sent away the generous De Soto, and with seeming reluctance listened to the fierce words of Almagro; when he saw that dark, powerful, intent face brooding at one end of a table as he stood in chains, listening to words he did not understand.

That same night he held his peace when they took him out and murdered him. And the face of Pizarro glowed implacable and stern under the torches, untouched by any human emotion, his stubby fingers touching the brass and ivory butt of the pistol at his waist.

A face glowing again in the light of faggots that burned alive other Incas, or shadowed in the gray light that saw his friend and cheated partner, Almagro,

beheaded; a face indomitable beneath the reproaches of De Soto and other men, still rising above them all, grinding them down with relentless iron will. A face, a little older, more bitter, more absolute, in the vaulted light of a church—and growing cold there, wan and waxen, where the swords of assassins glittered red above.

No human feeling, even in death.

MARTIN BURNSIDE was out when I went to his house, but was expected back shortly. I went on into his study, tossed the written pages on his desk, and laid the pistol there. The wrappings fell away from it.

I lit a cigar, staring at the accursed thing, loathing the touch of it, the very look of it. Evil surrounded it; a malign influence seemed to exude from that corrupted metal. As it lay there, the glitter of cruel eyes seemed to reach out and fasten upon me, and follow me.

"Damn it!" I exclaimed, and came to my feet.

"So?" Martin Burnside walked in, took one look at me, and chuckled. "I perceive that you comprehend my unpleasant sensations of yesterday. Ah, the story! Good. Then you certainly comprehend them. Hadn't you better come along and see Hyslop? He's really a very good psychiatrist—"

"Damn psychiatrists!" I blurted. "And you too, for inducing me to take that blasted thing home with me! I tell you, there's evil in it!"

Martin went to the desk and touched the pistol with his finger-tips, and nodded a little.

"I don't doubt it, for the thing belonged to an evil man—yet a man whose name will live."

"As a curse."

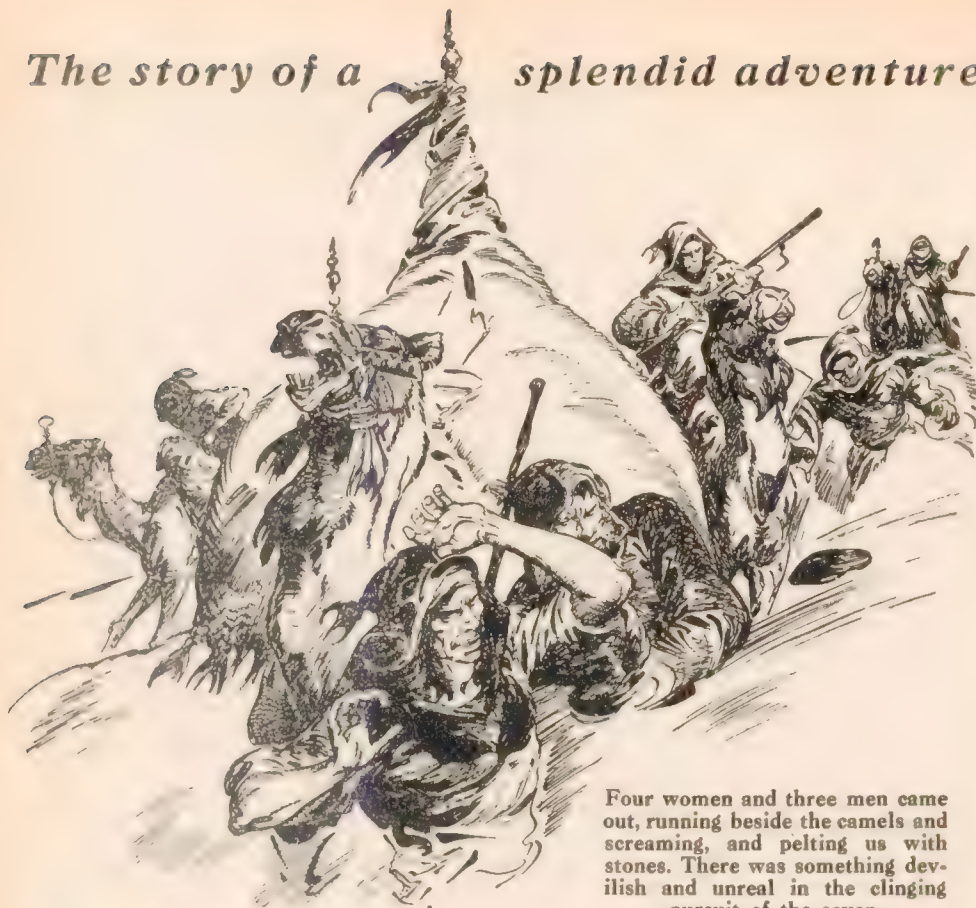
"No doubt." Martin shrugged and picked up the heavy mass of rust and ruin. "But when you stop to think of it, this is worth while having. It has no story to tell; and yet it heard the Inca speak, my boy. It heard the Inca speak! And through your finger-tips, through your typewriter, perhaps, it has made the Inca speak once again. By the way—do you still doubt that this pistol belonged to Pizarro?"

I looked at it, and turned away with a shiver.

"No. It could have belonged to no other man in the world."

Another fine story in this brilliant series depicting weapons throughout the ages will appear in the next—the May—issue.

The story of a splendid adventure!



Four women and three men came out, running beside the camels and screaming, and pelting us with stones. There was something devilish and unreal in the clinging pursuit of the seven.

CARAVAN

The Story Thus Far:

NOW, a devil in a family is a fine thing; it's a never-ending thrill he gives to the sober ones. It is of my uncle Thurland Spillane that I am thinking right now. . . . A little child was I when he left my father's farm, that is on the road from Glengariff to Kenmare; but I had heard much of him—of him and his brother Flane. Wild hawks of trouble they were, ranging the wide world.

Then, after seven years and a month, on a wild night in January, Thurland Spillane came home. Not a scratch of a pen to announce his coming! Putting his hands under the arms of my mother, Thurland lifted her high; then as he lowered her gently, he kissed her on each cheek.

"You have grown younger, Margaret," he said softly. "Yes, younger and more beautiful." And when he said that, he became a god to me.

"And where might you have come from now?" asked my father, after Thurland had taken the edge off his appetite.

"From London," answered Thurland. "I came a roundabout way out of Russia. By China and other places. I have hurried here because another person—a person that I love more than my two eyes and my two hands—is making for your farm. Across the world she is heading for this little spot in Kerry!"

And he went on to tell us of this lovely lady, daughter of a czar and a woman of Perm. In Irkutsk, the assassins of Czar Nicholas had sought to kill her too, and Thurland had fought for her, and killed the assassins—and there was a price on his head in Russia because of that. . . . They had fallen in love, but had to part to evade pursuit. And he had given her the name of our farm in Kerry as the only fixed address by which he might be reached. Now, he

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By JAMES FRANCIS DWYER

Illustrated by John Richard Flanagan



TREASURE

had learned, she was coming—and he was here to meet her. . . .

She came at last, a lady even lovelier than Thurland described her. And for some days it was a joy to see the two homeless wanderers together at our peaceful farm in Kerry. But pursuit caught up with them—in the person of a giant Russian. Thurland fought him, choked him—left him for dead, and fled the country again with the lady. But when Father and I went to dispose of the body, it was gone.

Long months passed. Then came a letter from Thurland—a letter from Fez, where he and Flane and the lady were making ready for a hazardous journey into the far Sahara in quest of a tremendous buried treasure of which Flane had learned.

I was fifteen, and strong for my age. And Africa came up and snuffed around my bed. The Africa in which my two

uncles Thurland and Flane were seeking the greatest treasure in the world! That evening when I went to my room I wrote a letter to my mother, telling her what I was sure, however, she already knew; then I made a bundle of my clothes, climbed out of the window and took the road to Kenmare.

There was a whispering wind at my heels, and the road seemed to run with me like a dog going out a-hunting. And Spring was so busy that I heard her as I walked. Heard her like a monster midwife that was bringing buds and leaves and flowers into the world with the touch of her hands. (*The story continues in detail:*)

THE city of Cork was the first big town I had ever seen. And the sight of it sent the blood rushing in waves to my head. I had never seen such crowds as I saw on the Grand Parade, Great George's Street and the South Mall; but it was



He took a live scorpion out of his pocket and made a movement as if he would throw it onto our table.

the smell of the sea that thrilled me most of all. For Cork, to the minds of all men bred in the south of Ireland, is the door to the free world, the spring-board from which they take a dive to freedom. And so it was with me on that first blessed spring evening when I stood on St. Patrick's Bridge and watched the waters of the Lee rushing seaward with a glaze on them, smooth and unrippled, like water you see in dreams. They were like the Irish, inasmuch as they showed a desire to get away from Ireland, hurrying like the devil by Little Island out to Queenstown and the big sea.

And they spoke to me as I stood and watched them. "Move away, little boy!" they cried. "Ireland might have been a fine place in the days of Maláchi, but it's nothing now. Nothing at all."

That night, near Penrose Quay, I entered a public-house to buy a glass of stout, and sat myself down in a corner near a blue-eyed boy a year or so older than myself. Two dogs playing with each other on the floor of the bar-room made us friendly, and we commenced to

talk. I said that I had left my home because the world had called me, and the boy nodded and seemed to understand. For there is no quicker understanding in all the world than that which one boy has for another.

"I," said the strange lad, "am a cabin boy on a steamer that is leaving tomorrow morning for Lisbon. She is the

Glenmoreland Castle, and she carries freight but no passengers. And after Lisbon, she is going through the Straits of Gibraltar to Oran and Algiers, and places farther east."

For the moment I couldn't speak. "Oran and Algiers, and places farther east!" What words to drift into the ears of a boy on a spring evening! Somewhere down below Oran and Algiers were my uncles Thurland and Flane, and a woman whose face was always lit up with a strange glow from within, like that which the clever painters put upon the faces of the saints.

We had another pint of porter. I made silly remarks about liking to do this and that, and to see the big world, and the boy put them together in his own way till they made him ask a question.

"Are you meaning that you'd like to ship on the *Glenmoreland Castle*?"

My heart skipped a beat. The words were a loop of color that wound itself around the big arteries and frightened me. Would I like to ship on the *Glenmoreland Castle*? Would I like to be Haroun-al-Raschid or the Khán of Tartary! I tried to thrust the "Yes," to my lips, but my throat was too dry for the word to slip through it.

"Because," said the boy, sipping his porter, "the third mate of the *Glen* is my mother's brother, and I'll put in a word for you. We can do with another boy."

"If you can," I said, getting my words out by moistening my lips with a sip of porter, "I shall pray for you every night if I live to be as old as Mary Casey, who had her son drive her to the top of a hill when she was one hundred and seventy years old, she thinking the Almighty had forgotten her."

"I'll be well paid, then," said the boy. "Come on down to Queenstown with me, and then start praying."

IN the soft dawn of the following morning I saw the coast of Ireland slip back into the mist that hung over Queenstown. The *Glenmoreland Castle* pushed her bull-nosed snout into the Atlantic. Great lolloping waves rushing up from the equator broke on her bows and ran in foam along her deck. Waves that had come hot-foot up from Africa.

The strange boy, whose name was Felix Coghlan, knew a lot of stories—fine stories! A brother of his had been sent to jail in Cork for throwing a brick through the window of a landlord, and the brother's dog had gone to the gates of the jail and wouldn't move away.

"We had to take food to him," said Felix, "but he was so sad because my brother Dan was locked up that he wouldn't eat anything. And he wouldn't take a drink, and each day he got thinner and thinner. And the damned jailers threw stones at him because they didn't like him sitting there in front of the jail gates, and watching them, and thinking they were swine, which they were. For three weeks he lay there at the gate of the prison waiting for my brother Dan to come out; then he died."

I told him about Emmet and Sarsfield, and how they fought with the big fur coat that my Uncle Thurland wore on the night he came home. And I told him about the Russian lady and how she talked with Cromwell, the black cat that lived under the barn. Lots of things I told him, and we became great friends. I even told him a little, just a little, of what Thurland and Flane were doing.

"Treasure?" he gasped, when I repeated a few words of what I had overheard in our barn at the Green Tree Farm. "Treasure, Jimmy? Why, I'm nutty about treasure! Do you think—do you really think that we could find your uncles if we jumped the ship at Oran or Algiers?"

"I don't know," I said. "My uncles move around a lot. They don't stay long in the same place."

"We can move around too," said Felix. "I've got a queer feeling. It wasn't just chance that made you and me speak to each other in that pub in Cork. Not a bit of it. It was all laid down. Everything is laid down for everybody, just like the course of this old ship. She doesn't know that Captain Beecher is up there on the bridge with a chart and a sextant. She doesn't know that at all. She just thinks she can go anywhere she wants to, but she can't. Old Beecher takes a sight through a sextant and draws a little line on the chart, and she follows it. Some one is drawing lines and sighting sextants for you and me, and we're just going the course that's planned."

Felix told me more about his brother who had been in jail. His brother was in love with a girl before he jerked the brick through the landlord's window, and this girl sent some food into the jail while he was waiting trial. In a loaf of bread she put a sovereign, thinking that he might buy some little privilege with it.

This Dan Coghlan found the sovereign, and he was upset because he didn't think he had treated the girl right. He hid the coin, and he made a resolve that when he got out of jail he would have the sovereign made into a wedding-ring for her. But the warders had a suspicion that he was hiding something. Twenty times they searched him, and they were so hungry to find his treasure that he had to change the hiding-place day after day. At last they got it, he having planted it a lump of soap; and not content with getting the sovereign, they gave him a hiding for fooling them.

"Don't get into jail in Ireland," said Felix. "The Irish are queer people. They can cry like the devil to see some one grilling on a fire if they're not doing the stoking; but give them a chance to push the firewood under the chap on the grill, and they're as happy as kings."

WE rolled into Lisbon, hurriedly unloaded part of the cargo and went on again. The very nearness of Africa thrilled me. At times I was afraid, filled with a strange sort of terror that made me hunt stupidly for a reason. For it seemed that my longing for the country had about it the sort of tragic fascination that clutches a bird when a snake stares at it.

I saw the coast at Tangier as we waddled through the Strait of Gibraltar. Saw it in the morning mist. "That's your



A strange wild town, with its *souks* and mosques, its narrow streets covered with fronds to keep

Africa," said Felix; and he looked at me in surprise as he spoke. For I was crying—crying for what reason I know not. It wasn't joy, it wasn't admiration; it wasn't love of the land. Perhaps it was fear.

I was not allowed to go ashore at Oran, the *Glenmoreland Castle* not entering the port proper, but standing out beyond the *Grande Jetée*. The faint hum of the city came out to me on the wind, and with the faint noise there came the odor of Africa—the fine primitive odor that can never be found in Europe. For Europe has been trampled flat through the centuries, trampled flat and beaten into submission, while Africa thumbs her nose to the little fools who think they are taming her.

At Algiers, Felix and I were given shore leave. A bumboat man landed us

at the Rampes Chasseloup-Laubat; and after we had climbed to the Boulevard de la République, we stood for a moment and looked at the steamer lying in the Port de Commerce. That was my last glimpse of the *Glenmoreland Castle*; except a view of her riding-lights, I never saw her again. But I knew nothing of what lay before me when I looked seaward on that May morning. . . .

A fine city is Algiers. The novelty of it brought a sort of drunkenness to me: the Arabs with their robes, and their heelless slippers, and their turbans kept in place with cords made of twisted camel-hair; and the women all in white with only their eyes showing, their black eyes that were hot and glittering and deep, as my Uncle Thurland wrote.

And at each street-corner I sniffed odors that were new to me: Saffron, and



off the fierce sun. We were shouldered by the crowds, brushed by the filthy rags of beggars.

musk, the smoke of burning charcoal, and a heady perfume that the wind brought up from the big sands to the southward. And the odors, sweet and sour, were like the arms of Africa around me—the big black arms that I had dreamed of for years, and which now held me in an embrace that was a little frightening. . . .

We went to the Mosque de la Pêcherie, taking off our shoes at the entrance, and putting on straw slippers. We roamed up and down the streets, buying sweets and ice-cream in the Place du Gouvernement; and when it came evening, we ate at a little restaurant in the Rue de Chartres. We ate kous-kous, and drank Algerian red wine mixed with water.

The night made Africa more mysterious and more frightening. Through the window of the restaurant came the *swish-*

swish of the heelless babouches, the guttural chatter of Arabs sitting on the edge of the sidewalk, the drawn-out cries of men selling little cakes and sweetmeats.

A fellow with a lot of curved knives came up to our table and tried to sell one to Felix. Felix wanted to buy it, but he thought the price was too high. The fellow asked twenty francs; then he came down to ten, then to seven. Felix said then he had changed his mind, and the man got angry. The proprietor of the restaurant put him out, but he came to the window and cursed us in Arabic, drawing his finger across his throat to show Felix what he would do with him. He took a live scorpion out of the pocket of his robe and made a movement as if he would throw it onto our table. It was the first scorpion I had ever seen, and I was scared a lot. It was a big fellow,

black as night, and it carried its long tail curved over its back.

"Don't be frightened of it," Felix said. "He's cut its sting off. If he throws it on the table, I'll go out and punch him in the face."

"Wouldn't it be better to buy the knife from him?" I said.

"Not now," said Felix. "He'd think that he scared us into buying it. He'll go away after a bit if we take no notice of him."

But I couldn't keep my eyes away from the window, thinking the Arab might throw the scorpion at us. That scorpion was Africa; it was part of the fear that was on me. It sent a creepy feeling up and down my spine. Its powerful pincers and its flexible tail reaching up over its back took away my appetite.

The Arab went away at last, and I breathed more freely. Felix instructed me how to deal with Arabs. "Never let them know that you are afraid," he said. "The game is to bluff them."

"It's pretty hard to bluff anyone who is going to throw a live scorpion at you," I said.

"It might be for you," he laughed; "but if you keep your thoughts off the scorp, it's an easy matter. I didn't look scared, so he went away."

We had been told to return to the *Glenmoreland Castle* before ten o'clock, so when we had paid our check at the restaurant, Felix suggested that we should have a look at the Kasba and then go down the ramp and get a boat back to the steamer.

"We've got a good two hours," he said. "Let's go."

THE night was waiting for us—the velvety night of Algiers, threaded with whispers from latticed windows, with furry laughter and the never-ending slithery noise made by the babouches.

I should have protested, but Felix was two years older than I, and he had been in Algiers before. Anyhow, the African night choked all protests. It took me by the hand and pulled me along the street in the direction of the Kasba. Felix assured me that the place was dead during the daytime; but when the night came down, it was alive with dancing and singing and all sorts of amusing happenings.

We climbed the steps and plunged into the little narrow lanes that run off the stairway that leads to the top of the hill. From dark doorways there came

the throbbing of the *derbouka*, the beating of little drums, and the chants of singers. Felix was brave, but I was afraid. The hand of Africa was damp. It gave me shivers.

Felix pushed aside a curtain and looked into a lighted room. He turned to me and spoke. "There's a girl doing a shimmy dance," he said. "Come on in."

We paid three francs apiece to the Arab at the doorway, and we sat on a bare bench. A girl, copper-colored and shimmering like gold, she being nearly naked, began to dance, her body making startling movements to what seemed the wicked suggestions of a skin drum that throbbed somewhere in the darkness behind the backdrop.

I WISHED to leave, but Felix grabbed my arm and held me. The drum throbbed, and the flashing limbs of the girl moved in answer to its command. There were about twenty men in the room, but no one moved. They sat like stone images while she weaved up and down the little stage, the light from the two oil lamps bringing out flashes of gold and shadowy patches on her bare body. Anklets, thick and heavy, answered the throb of the drum with sharp protesting clicks.

She finished with a wild spin that made the lights flicker; then as she came to a halt, she looked out over the squatting audience and saw Felix and me.

"Oh, oh!" she cried. "Give me money, little boys! Lots of money!"

I started for the door as she came toward us, but I had only covered half the distance when a man rose from the bench immediately in front of us, and let out a roar of delight as he grabbed at me. It was the fellow who sold the knives, the man with the scorpion!

I wriggled, from his clutch, and he rushed at Felix. He flung his arms over the head of Felix, and as he did so, he screamed out orders to the man at the door. One of the lamps was overturned, and there was a wild scramble on the part of the audience to get into the narrow lane.

Felix called my name. "Hit him, Jimmy!" he yelled. "He's choking me!"

I had bought a cheap clothes-brush during the afternoon, and when Felix asked help, I banged the Arab on the side of the head with the back of the brush. I think I must have hurt him, for he let go of Felix and struck me in the face with his fist. For a minute I

was blinded by the blow; then Felix took my arm, and we stumbled through the door into the dark lane.

"Run, Jimmy!" cried Felix. "Run with me!"

But the Arab was not going to let us escape so easily. He cannoned against Felix, knocking him flat on the cobbled path; then he proceeded to jump on him, screaming Arabic curses as he hopped up and down. A friend of the Arab got hold of me, swung me off my feet and threw me face downward, my nose striking the stones with a force that knocked a lot of fight out of me.

"Stop it!" I shouted. "Police! Help! Police!"

It was then that I heard the oath, the strange oath that had frightened all of us on the wild night when Thurland Spillane came home to the Green Tree Farm. I thought for an instant that I had become insane, or that I had been killed by the fall.

"Christ's woes!" roared the husky voice; then the Arab who had fallen on top of me was lifted up by a mighty hand and flung against the wall of the lane. An arm of steel went around me, and I was on my feet. On my feet and looking into the face of my uncle, Thurland the Devil!

"It's Jimmy!" he cried, and his shout echoed against the walls of the Kasba. In the bar of light that came from the doorway I saw his face: the fierce prideful face, the skin drawn tight over the bones, the eyes that looked out like two spearmen on a castle wall.

The Arabs fell back from him, for there was murder in his eyes. He leaped at one, and the fellow squealed like a rabbit. The knife-seller received a belt under the ear that sent him roaring into the darkness; then Thurland steadied himself and spoke.

"Mother o' God!" he cried. "And what are you doing here, Jimmy?"

STANDING in the dark lane, I blubbered out my story: how I had run away from the farm, and how I had met Felix in Cork and got a job on the *Glenmoreland Castle*. "This is Felix," I said. "The Arab got mad with us because Felix wouldn't buy a knife."

Thurland looked down the lane as if a desire to chase the Arab and kill him had come to him; then he took my hand, and we started down the steps of the Kasba toward the town. Felix and I were silent, but now and then my uncle

made remarks in a voice that told us comments or contradictions were not desired.

"You will come with me, Jimmy," he said. "We will take the little boy down to the harbor and see that he gets aboard his ship."

"Yes, Uncle Thurl," I said. "Couldn't —couldn't Felix stay too?"

"No," said my uncle, firmly. "One fool boy is enough."

With Thurland walking between us, we crossed the Place du Gouvernement and went down the ramp to the water. I pointed out the lights of the *Glenmoreland Castle*; a boatman pulled into the stringpiece; and we put Felix aboard, my uncle paying the Arab and threatening to break his head if he attempted to charge one sou more for the work.

"Good-by, Felix," I said.

WHAT'LL I tell the captain?" stammered Felix, who was sulky because he couldn't stay and hunt for treasure.

"Tell him that the Bey of Algiers has claimed his cabin-boy," laughed my uncle. "Just that! And if he asks any more, tell him that the Spillanes are landsmen and not sailors. Here, I'll give you my address in case he wants to make inquiries."

Thurland wrote his address on a card and gave it to Felix, and the boat pushed off in the direction of the steamer. "No captain bothers much about a runaway," said my uncle. "They're too lazy to make inquiries." And that was the truth, for the *Glenmoreland Castle* sailed next morning without any inquiries being made about me by the captain or the police.

"Now," said Thurland, as we walked up to the Boulevard de la République, "we will get a carriage and go home. Do you know who is at home, Jimmy?"

Now all the time, from the moment when Thurland had lifted me from the ground, I had been wondering if she was with him. Walking down to the wharf, I pictured her somewhere in the strange city, waiting quietly for him to return; but when he put the question to me, I was afraid to speak lest the picture I had painted should be snatched away from me.

Possibly Thurland knew why I couldn't speak, for he was quick to kill the fear that clutched me. "She spoke of you just yesterday," he said softly.

"And tomorrow morning," he went on, "your Uncle Flane, whom you don't re-



There life throbbed
and pulsed in a way
that was raw and
curious and a little
wicked.

member at all, is coming up from El Kantara, a place that is way down on the desert in the direction of Biskra. It's lucky you met me tonight, for we are on the move. This is Tuesday, and on Friday we pull out of Algiers."

"Where to, uncle?" I asked.

"To a city called Marrakech," answered Thurland. "It's in Morocco."

"And—and can I come?" I stammered.

"I think it would be wise of you to come with us," laughed Thurland. "That chap that was choking you tonight might hunt you up if you were left alone. Hop into this carriage now, and we'll get home. She'll be surprised to see you."

CHAPTER VI

DEAD MAN ON THE SIDEWALK

SHE was lovelier than I had pictured her in the thousand and one dreams of her that I had had since the evening when she and Thurland hurriedly left the farm. When Thurland pushed me forward and said simply, "Here's Jimmy who has come down from Ireland to see you," the strange unnatural beauty of her came out and thrust against me so that I stood helpless, staring at great amethystine eyes, and her face that always had that luminous quality that one sees on the pictures of saints.

"Jimmy!" She only whispered the word, but it went through me like a silver skewer. "Jimmy!" And next

moment she had an arm around my shoulder and was pressing me close to her body, her sweet body that had always left little drifts of perfume in the rooms through which she walked during her stay at the Green Tree Farm; and her lips were pressed on mine. Then she spoke in English to Thurland, English with a quaint accent that gave the words a fairy quality, calling on him to tell how he had met me and why I was in Algiers.

And Thurland told, making the recital a humorous one, exaggerating the fight in the lane, and accusing Felix and myself of rough-housing the Kasba. And while he told, she held me close to her, and I was drunk with the joy that I got from her nearness.

After Thurland had told his story she questioned me about the farm: About my mother and father, my brother and sisters. She remembered the dogs Emmet and Sarsfield, and she was sad for a moment when I told her that Emmet, the big wolfhound, had been killed by a bull that gored him when he went to the rescue of Terry Flanagan, who was being butted to death by his own prize bull, but who managed to crawl through the fence while the bull was finishing Emmet. She was sad about that.

"But Cromwell is alive," I said. "You remember Cromwell? The black cat that lived under the barn, and who wouldn't look at anyone till you spoke to him? He's alive! You—you made a good cat out of him by talking to him."

She smiled, and still holding me, she led me into the dining-room of the apartment they occupied. "We will have some supper," she said, "and while we eat, you will tell us everything."

It was a fine apartment that my uncle and the lady occupied. They had rented it, so Thurland said, because they disliked hotels, and it was furnished in the Moorish fashion with lots of rugs that had been woven by women away down

in the desert. Rugs that were striped black and white, and others that were stained with curious blues and reds and yellows. And there were cushions by the score, and great plaques of beaten brass that shone in the light. And there were ivory elephants, and crocodiles carved out of ebony wood, and there were fetishes with ugly faces. To me it was all thrilling and wonderful, but Thurland jeered at it.

"The proprietor is a native," he said. "He likes all this junk lying around."

"I like it," I said. "It's so different to Ireland. Don't you like it, Aunt?"

"You must call me Anastasia," she said sweetly. "Do you remember that you couldn't pronounce it when I was at your father's home? 'Aunt' makes me feel old. Now, say 'Anastasia.'"

"Anastasia," I murmured.

"That's right," she said, smiling at me.

IT was late when we stopped talking. Thurland showed me to a bedroom I thought the most beautiful room I had ever seen, and there he left me. I sat for a long time at the window, looking down over the city of Algiers. It seemed a century since I had landed with Felix, although it was only a matter of nine hours. When I climbed into the bed, I couldn't sleep. If I dozed for a minute, I had dreams of scorpions and knives so I woke up in a sweat of fear.

At the dawn I was at the window again. Up from the mosque far below came the cry of the muezzin telling the faithful of the goodness of Allah, and the words were like lariats of sound that hurled themselves up into the still air and wound themselves around my heart. I was in Africa, the dark frightening Africa of which I had dreamed—thousands of miles from Green Tree Farm and from John Trench, who tried to discourage boys who dreamed of treasure.

Thurland spoke at breakfast. "We will go and buy some clothes for you, Jimmy," he said; "then we will meet Flane. Do you remember Flane?"

"No," I answered. "I was too small when he went away. I have a memory of a big man, but I wouldn't know him if I met him."

"He's big, all right," grinned Thurland.

A pleasant place was the city of Algiers that morning. A place filled with all the strangeness that makes romance. My eyes and ears and nose took in the sights, the sounds, the odors that, twist-

ed together, made a heady mixture that brought pleasure indescribable.

After I had been rigged out in a shop on the Rue de Constantine, we went down to the railway station to meet the train from El Kantara. My Uncle Thurland seemed anxious to see his brother, and I wondered a lot as we stood together. Was Flane bringing news of the treasure? Was the journey to Marrakech connected with the immense store of gems and gold of which he had spoken to my father?

I had a desire to tell Thurland that I had overheard that story, but the train rushed in at that moment, and I held my tongue.

"This is Jimmy, Michael's boy," said Thurland; and my uncle Flane Spillane, looking very surprised, shook my hand.

Taller than Thurland was Flane, taller and heavier. But there was a great resemblance between the two. The same tanned, lean faces that seemed as alert as the face of a lynx, the insolent nose of one the double of the other; the mouth of Thurland, with its half-contemptuous grin, a match for the mouth of Flane. Yet they were different, different in a way that I couldn't tell then, but which I discovered in the mad wild days that were to follow.

Thurland told his brother in a few swift words of our meeting in the Kasba; and Flane grinned and said nothing. He was niggardly with words, was my Uncle Flane. When he got hold of a remark, he seemed to be tearing it to pieces with his mental teeth, and he made no answer till he had sniffed and chewed every word of it.

"And now what are you going to do?" he asked, looking down at me.

"I thought he might come with us," said Thurland.

FLANE considered this. He ran a big hand over his face in the manner of a great cat washing itself, then looked at me as if I were something that had crawled into the machinery of his life and had upset his plans.

"It's not wise," he said. "We had better send him back home. Damn it, Thurl, he might be killed! Does he know anything about what we're doing?"

I got my breath then. The moment had come to make a confession. "I know everything," I gasped. "That's—that's why I came to Africa! I—I was in the barn listening, on the day when Uncle Thurland told my father all about it!"

"All about what?" asked Flane, and his words had steel in them.

"All about the Masque of Death and the—"

My Uncle Flane put a big hand over my mouth and pushed me toward the entrance to the platform. In silence the three of us climbed into a carriage. Thurland gave the address in a whisper, and we were off.

"Have you ever spoken to anyone about this matter?" asked Flane harshly.

"Never!" I cried. "My father knew that I overheard what Uncle Thurland said, but I have never mentioned the matter to anyone."

Flane considered the matter while the lean white horse pulled us up the slope. He said a few words in Arabic to Thurland; then he spoke again. "Your uncle thinks it wouldn't hurt to take you along," he said, "but I'm doubtful. Now swear to me you will never mention a word to anyone, of the things you hear while you are with us. Because, if you do and I hear of it, I will kill you with my own hands—although you are my brother's child. Your chatter would bring death to all of us, for that same death is following so close at our heels that at times I get the cold breath of him on the back of my neck."

"I swear!" I cried. "I swear I will never speak. Uncle Thurland knows that I wouldn't."

"He's all right," murmured Thurland. "Anyhow, I owe Jimmy a debt. He saved the life of Anastasia on the night she came to Michael's farm."

FLANE didn't reply; and no more was said till we reached Thurland's apartment. When Flane had talked a little while with Anastasia, he called me into the sitting-room, sat me down directly in front of him, then started to talk.

"Listen," he said; "I am dead against you going with us, but Thurl wants it. If you heard the story that he told to your father, you know all that there is to tell, except that the dangers that were small things years ago are big now. Do you understand?"

I moistened my lips and said: "Yes, Uncle Flane."

"Because," said Flane, "we have found out a lot that other people would like to know. We are tracked from one spot to another like a dog-fox in Kerry, and there isn't a hole in the countryside where we are safe. Are you frightened when you hear that?"

Frightened I was, of course; but my desire to travel in the company of Thurland and Flane and Anastasia was greater than the fear. I shook my head, fearing that if I tried to speak, the words would boggle in my dry throat.

"Well, that's that," said Flane. "I'll write Michael tomorrow, and tell him that you are with us."

But my Uncle Flane did not write my father the next day, and for a very good reason which I will tell.

WE stayed up late that evening, my two uncles talking together while I chatted with Anastasia, telling her of things that had happened at the farm; and in which she showed great interest. She liked stories that were strange, and her lips would form themselves into a round "O" when she was frightened. I told her of the fairy fox that runs on Michaelmas Night through the length and breadth of Ireland, scratching at the door of every house at which a baby will be born during the year to come. And this fairy fox is chased by a pack of fairy hounds that are kept by the devil, for the Irish think that the devil works for the English to keep the birth-rate down. Swift is the fox, and under his feet as he goes spring up the Michaelmas daisies. From house to house he runs, scratching for a second at each door, so that the listening wife within will know that a baby will be born to her.

"Do you believe it, Jimmy?" she murmured.

"They've been seen," I said. "A fearsome sight, so they say: the fox running across the moonlit hills, the hounds following so swiftly and so silently on his trail."

"It makes me afraid, Jimmy," she whispered. "I'm always afraid. Are you?"

"No," I answered, but I lied because the words of Flane came up in front of me. "There isn't a hole in the countryside where we are safe," Flane had said.

It was midnight when we went to bed. I was nervous and upset. Every hour or so I would wake up and listen to the noises that drifted up from the city—the strange city that was Algiers. . . .

It was about five o'clock that a great gabbling started in the street directly beneath the windows of my uncle's apartment. Three or four persons were talking wildly; then a police whistle sounded, and I jumped out of bed and looked down. There was a little circle of men

standing around something on the sidewalk, their heads and shoulders bent down as they stared at the object.

My Uncle Flane, in his pajamas, came out on the balcony before his bedroom window, and I spoke to him. "What is it?" I asked.

He didn't answer for a moment; then he stepped swiftly back from the railing and spoke to me in a hushed voice. "Go back to bed and keep quiet," he said. "Quick, before they see you!"

I sprang into the bed and pulled the clothes up over my head. I had a belief that the danger of which Flane had spoken was quite close to us that morning, quite close indeed.

A good hour went by. I heard the sounds of a car, and the loud voice of some one in authority giving directions; then there was a clatter on the stairs of the apartment-house, and a little later the bell rang.

Thurland and Flane were whispering to each other in the passageway leading to the front door, and I think they went together to answer the bell. I heard the voices of the callers. They spoke in French. They were policemen.

They were in the flat now, talking to Flane and Thurland. I didn't understand what they said; but Thurland, who knew French better than Flane, translated a few remarks that told me everything. A man had been found on the sidewalk in a dying condition. On the palms of his hands were smears of green paint, and the concierge of the apartment-house said that there was fresh green paint on the railing of the little balcony outside my Uncle Flane's room!

The police, three of them, as I found by listening, went through my uncle's room to the balcony. I crept to the window and peeped at them. They were examining the railing, touching it with their fingers to see if it was wet. Thurland and Flane silently watched them.

AFTER examination of the railing, the police went away. When I heard the hall door close, I came out into the passage and saw Thurland. Flane had gone back to his room and was dressing hurriedly.

"A burglar tried to climb onto the balcony from the roof," said Thurland. "He must have lost his grip when he grabbed the railing. It had just been painted. The fellow crashed down three stories."

"Is he dead?" I asked.

"Dying," said Thurland. "Flane is going to the hospital to see if he recognizes him."

Flane came out of his room, said something in an undertone to Thurland, and went down to the street. I dressed myself and watched from the window. There was quite a crowd on the sidewalk. Scores of French folk, and Arabs. One minute I'd see them stooping over the blood-spots on the sidewalk; the next minute they'd straighten themselves to look at the balcony from which the man had fallen.

IN an hour Flane returned. He came into the sitting-room and made a signal to his brother. Thurland glanced at me, then said: "Jimmy is in it now. Let's talk in front of him if we want to."

"Well, it's one of them," said Flane gruffly. "I got to the hospital five minutes before he died."

"Did he recognize you?"

"I think so. He stared at me for a full minute; then he shut his eyes and went off quick. Spine was broken."

"Must have come up on the same train as you," said Thurland. "Trailed us here from the station."

"That's so," said Flane. "Lucky for us that he was killed outright. There's a chance that he was the only trailer, and if we get away quick, they'll be off the scent."

"The police?" asked Thurland.

"They think he was just an ordinary burglar who had bad luck. They've no suspicions of anything. Think it a case of theft."

"Then we'll go?"

"As quick as we can," said Thurland. He turned to Anastasia, who had come into the room. Her face had the same beautiful pallor that I remembered on the evening when she and Thurland fled from my father's farm. In the eyes that were like two great amethysts sat the little devils of fear. She came close to Thurland and put her arm around his neck.

Thurland smiled at her in the whimsical fashion that he had. He saw the terror in her eyes, and he thought to chase it away by humorous words. "You'll like Marrakech," he said. "It's a pleasant town. And there's a square there called the Place Djema El Fna, that is half as big as the Kremlin in Moscow; and from the moment the sun climbs up out of the sand till the last star fades, there is movement. It's a devil of a

place for fun. On the square are dancers and wizards, snake-charmers, sand-diviners, wrestlers, sword-swallowers, ballad-singers and story-tellers. And the hot air vibrates and quivers with the cries and movements—the wild springing of dancing bodies and the snaky twists of the muscles of the wrestlers.”

Thurland's description of Marrakech thrilled me so that I forgot the fear brought by the affair of the morning.

CHAPTER VII

THE GOLDEN WRESTLER

ACROSS the top of Africa! By towns whose very names were like the music of silver bugles. Names that made me choke and cry with the wonder that they brought. Names around which were twisted fine memories.

Towns that had just crept out of the dark mystery that had covered them for centuries, so that they were still shining with the nacre of romance. Not stale old places like Dublin and London, of which one was tired of hearing, but splendid new places that were still full of mystery! There they were, one after the other, squatting in the hot sunshine, with towers and minarets, and little narrow streets, and strange people who stared at the train as if they hated it—which they did, it breaking in on their lives and liberties, and bringing white-faced conquerors to beat them into submission. Hot and fierce is the hatred behind the black eyes of Northern Africa.

By Tlemcen, from which had come the first letter Thurland had written after leaving the farm! I told Anastasia of the stamp with the tower on it, and how it had brought dreams to me when I laid it on my pillow. . . .

By Oudjda, and through wild country that was still standing up against the invaders. By the great cliffs up which the French dragged their guns to fight the tribes that clung to their mountain homes and refused to lay down their arms. And over it all hung the atmosphere of blood and battle, of hate and of passion bred of the heat and the sand stretches and the rocky hills that ran back till they joined the big slopes of the Atlas Mountains.

And as I sat and stared at the countryside I thought of the Masque of Dark Death and all the treasure that my uncles were seeking. And at moments the country struck fear into my heart.

Thoughts of the warning of John Trench came to me, the words that he had spoken when I said I still had dreams of treasure. “The devil is plaiting a snare for your feet, Jimmy,” John Trench had said. “What has it brought your fine uncle, Thurland?”

I glanced at Thurland as I thought of the blind man's words, and Thurland smiled. “Great country, Jimmy,” he said. “Ever read ‘Treasure Island?’”

“Yes,” I answered.

“Well, the boy in that yarn had the same name as yours. He was *Jim*. Now I'll bet that when you get back from this trip, you'll have a bigger yarn to tell than he had. I'll bet you will. A whopper of a yarn that will make little stay-at-home people blink their eyes. And you'll tell about Flane and me, and Anastasia. And you'll dedicate the book to us, although we might be dead and gone, but we'll peep through a hole in the floor of heaven and read scraps of it, and grin.”

We came to Fez, and there we stayed for the night, it being necessary to change from one line to another to proceed to Rabat, Casablanca and Marrakech. Cunningly we got away from the station lest we be followed, Anastasia and I in the lead, with Thurland and Flane following at intervals, their keen eyes alert for anyone trailing us.

“One never knows,” said Flane as we reached the hotel. “For curiosity of the damndest kind, Africa beats the world. All the click-clacking of Kerry washerwomen is nothing to the oily tongues of Africa. In Ireland you have to open a window to see what is going on; but here they peep through the lattice-work that has been specially invented for spies.”

NEXT morning we went on. By Meknès and Knitra to Rabat, where the Sultan of Morocco lives in state; and there a man ran along the train calling the name of my Uncle Thurland. A wild hairy devil of a man, who spoke with a queer clucking noise as if he had a small cuckoo clock in his throat that he couldn't control. A strange man.

What he whispered to Thurland I don't know, but it seemed to be pleasing news, and both Thurland and Flane seemed happier as we steamed southward.

“We will sleep tonight at Casablanca, and go on to Marrakech tomorrow,” said Thurland, speaking to Anastasia. “Everything is going well. Don't be alarmed.”

"I am not alarmed when you are near," she murmured, but the fear-devils were still in her eyes, and the color came and went in her soft cheeks. And her breath came in little gasps as she looked out at the milling crowds on the platform. I didn't blame her for being a little upset by the mob that gaped at us as if we were animals.

There were Mohammedans in white burnouses and big yellow slippers with pointed toes; Moroccan Israelites with black caftans and small black caps perched on the backs of their heads; Sudanese that had the same dead blackness of the scorpion that the fellow had threatened to throw at Felix in Algiers; and now and then a dandified French officer or Spanish dealer who, catching sight of Anastasia, stopped to stare boldly till the anger on the face of Thurland warned them to move on.

WE came into Casablanca, and again we moved cautiously out of the station, Thurland and Flane flanking us and watching for possible spies. And the manner in which they examined the persons who were leaving the train increased the thrills that were mine. The story of the Masque of Death and all the treasure that kept it company throbbed and expanded within my brain, making me a trifle dizzy and uncertain upon my feet.

We slept the night at Casablanca, which is a town that lacks the poetry of Fez and Tlemcen, it being new and full of hastily built houses that have no memories. Early next morning we went to the Boulevard du 4e Zouaves and took a motor-omnibus for Marrakech.

In that ride of one hundred and sixty miles we did not see a tree. Great stretches of bare country, with clumps of cactus fighting for its very life, dotted here and there with nomad camps, their black, low-hung tents spread close together over a camping-ground, lean camels hobbled near by, and hungry dogs barking as the motor-bus roared along the rocky road.

Anastasia was frightened by the wildness of the country and the fierce-looking filthy natives that clustered around the bus when we stopped at little miserable villages. Small boys offered birds that they had captured; and she, being tender-hearted, bought the birds so that I could release them. But the poor wretched things had been held so long in the sweaty paws of the young Berbers that they could not fly out of danger



ANASTASIA

when I let them go, so they were captured and brought back to be sold over again.

"Keep them till we get away from the village," Anastasia whispered; so from each stopping-place I took three or four birds in my hat and carried them till we were out of reach of the cruel little devils who captured them.

I told Anastasia about the Macrooms, and how they went to Australia to hunt for gold and forgot to write to their old mother, and the story made her sad. And I told her how blind John Trench said the devil was plaiting a snare for my feet because I had dreams of treasure.

"But many nice boys have dreams of treasure," she murmured. "And nice men too. Look at Thurland and Flane."

I looked at my two uncles, and wondered if they had ever grown up. In their late twenties, they acted like two boys, hopping about the world, not caring a thing for the matters that trouble most men of their years. Politics they hated with a fine fierce hate, and all matters of trade were distasteful to them, and to be shut up in offices meant death; but they loved the things that boys love

—the open road, the thrill of far-away places, the hunt for strange and glorious things that the world had lost, the way children lose marbles at play.

For the world is full of stories of gorgeous things that have been lost through the centuries. No one knows now of the five dwarfs made of pure gold that Genghis Khan took after the sack of Samarkand. They have been lost. And Darius carried with him as a talisman a pearl that was as big as a pear, and which each night brought forth a small pearl the size of a teardrop, so that people thought it was crying for the hot sea around the Bahrein Islands from which it had come. That also has been lost.

And thinking of all the wonders of the world, and sitting close to Anastasia, we thundered into Marrakech, and I saw the Place Djema El Fna, of which Thurland had told us.

My uncle Thurland had not exaggerated the wonders of that Place. Always and always I shall remember it, for there life throbbed and pulsed in a way that was raw and curious and a little wicked. The civilization of the French had come up against the wall of barbarian ignorance, and the Place in the center of the city saw the European wave break on the century-old superstitions and dark beliefs of Africa. It was on this square that my two uncles met the great Arab wrestler, Ahmed Mansour, the Golden Man. Of that meeting I have told before, but it will bear repetition.

THURLAND and Flane, for some reason, had decided to wait at Marrakech, and we found quarters in the Hôtel Continental in the Medina, and only a few yards from the *souks* and the Place. And each morning at ten o'clock to the minute my uncles would cross the square, keeping their eyes open, for they had arranged, as I found later, for a meeting there with the wild hairy man who had run along the train at Rabat station, the man who talked with the queer clucking noise.

And on those morning walks I went with them, for the Place held an attraction for me that I cannot describe. In the hot, splintery sunshine were the story-tellers, and although I didn't understand a word that the story-tellers said in their singsong voices, I thrilled as I watched the heads of their squatting listeners being drawn forward when the tale reached a climax—drawn forward as if the teller had an invisible

cord around the lean throat of each listener, dragging them toward him at will.

And there were mad Chleuh men from the Atlas Mountains with fat bob-tailed snakes that had broad heads; and for the smallest coin in the world one of their company would work himself up into an hysterical rage and bite the head off a living reptile! For a piece of twenty-five centimes, worth less than an Irish penny, he would do this! Racing round the ring of pop-eyed watchers, the head of the snake between his teeth and the still writhing body in his hands!

"The filthiest job in the world for the worst wages," as Thurland remarked.

IT was on the third morning of our stay in Marrakech, we saw the Arab wrestler. A big upstanding brute of a man, muscled as no other man was ever muscled in the world before. Muscles that rippled like water flowing under silk. He was stark naked, except for a scarlet cloth tied tightly around his buttocks, and his skin was a strange golden tint, like copper in the sunshine. He pranced around on a mat, and bawled challenges to everyone that came within a hundred yards of him.

He saw Thurland and Flane as they pushed their way through the packed mass on the square, and he knew at a glance that they were athletes. For my uncles stood up above the crowd, and there was a sort of defiance in their faces; their eyes, as I have said, giving a challenge to the world.

"Ho!" shouted the Arab, cupping his hands to his mouth. "Ho, *Anglais!*" Then, in broken English, he cried: "Come on, big English elephants! Come on and take a fall with me!" He had wrestled, so we learned later, at the Albert Hall in London, and on that voyage he had picked up a little English.

The jeers of the wrestler got under the skin of Flane. With an oath he started to tear off his coat, but Thurland seized hold of him. "Don't be a fool, brother o' mine!" said Thurland, as Flane struggled. "Is it fun we are going to make for these lice of the desert? It's a bigger business that we have in hand, and everything we have done might be lost if you go sprawling around on a dirty mat to please this filthy crowd!"

But Flane was fighting mad.

Struggling with him, we led him across the Place to the gardens of the Koutoubia, and there he cooled down and became himself again.

"Say nothing of this to Anastasia," said Thurland, as we walked back to the hotel. "She worries enough about the things she sees, without telling her of what she doesn't."

I agreed, knowing well that what Thurland said was the truth. And I wondered about the splendid women who fall in love with wild hawks of trouble like my uncle, men who are forever flinging a glove in the face of Destiny and doing things that rack the nerves of the ones that love them. But all through the centuries they are the ones that women greatly love, and I suppose we should be thankful for that; for a nation of clerks and shopkeepers we might have become if there were no women to love the fighting-men of our race.

CHAPTER VIII

THE BATTLE ON THE ROOF

MOST unfortunate it was that my uncles had chosen the Place Djema El Fna as a meeting-place with the hairy man, for each morning the Arab would spot us and cry out his challenges.

My Uncle Flane couldn't sleep because of this wrestler Ahmed Mansour. In the hot nights the jeering Arab would rise up before him, and Flane's blood would race at fever heat, and words that were not prayers would come to his lips.

On these sleepless nights Flane would go up on the flat roof of the hotel and look out over the city. And a great sight is Marrakech, for leaning on the balustrade he could look out over ten thousand roofs to the Mamounia, and the Palais de la Bahia; over the Mellah and the waving palms to the great Atlas Mountains.

It was easy for a man to hop from one roof to another, the houses being built against each other, and the idea of a run across the roofs in the soft blue moonlight took the fancy of Flane.

"Will you come?" said he to Thurland, on a night when the three of us were looking at the city.

"I will not," said Thurland. "It's dangerous business, and it's a knife in your stomach that you'll be getting if you're not careful. And don't ask Jimmy, either."

Flane laughed, for a devil of recklessness was in him. He kicked off his shoes so that he could run lightly over the roofs, and he dropped quietly over the balustrade onto the house next door.

"If I don't come back, you can have all that I am worth," he said to Thurland; and with that he was off into the night, a human leopard on the prowl.

Now once Flane started that business, he repeated it, the very danger of it being like wine to him. And many of the householders took objections to him running across their roofs. One night, in leaping over a balustrade, he landed on the head of a Moor who was at his devotions, and the fellow nearly got Flane with a thrust of his knife. And another time he flushed a party of young Moorish ladies whose squeals woke the quarter. And there was a night when an Arab who had doubts about his wife's fidelity took a pot-shot at Flane with his rifle, the bullet grazing my uncle's shoulder as he fled.

There came a night when the moon rode high above the Grand Atlas, and the dogs barked because they saw specters in the wind. My Uncle Flane had run out over the Kasba by the great gate Bab Aguentaou, built hundreds of years ago by the sultans of the Almoravides.

It was near the Mosquée de la Kasba that my uncle came upon a sobbing youth crouched in the shadow thrown by the protecting wall.

My Uncle Flane stopped and asked what was wrong. And the youth wiped his eyes and answered. And the tale interested Flane, it being fat and colorful and one with the night and the winds.

In a big square house that was separated by a narrow street from the roof where Flane and the youth talked, lived an old Moor who was the richest man in Marrakech. He had great gobs of yellow gold, and chests full of coins.

"He has plundered me," said the boy. "He has robbed me of my sweetheart! He has bought her from her parents. This very evening they brought her to him, her eyes bound and a cloth over her mouth so that she couldn't scream. A capful of gold coins he gave for her."

UNCLE Flane considered the matter; then he spoke. "If I were you, young feller," he said, "I'd hop across this trench, slip down the door from the roof, give the old lad a poke in the ribs and take the lady away from him."

"But the guard!" gasped the boy. "The Arab wrestler who gives exhibitions on the Place Djema El Fna is protecting the house this night."

"Agh!" cried my Uncle Flane, with a sort of savage joy.

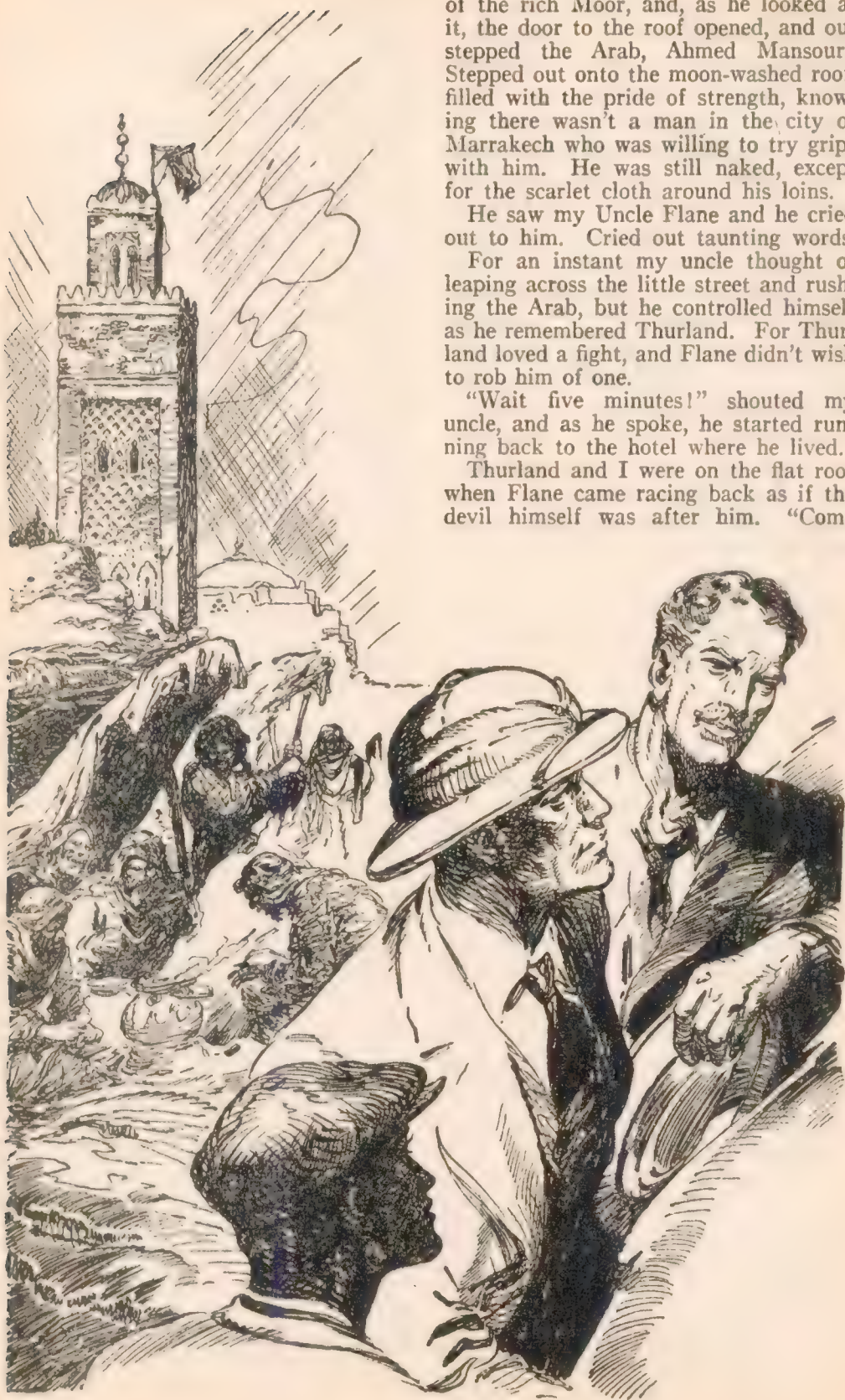
He stood up and looked at the house of the rich Moor, and, as he looked at it, the door to the roof opened, and out stepped the Arab, Ahmed Mansour! Stepped out onto the moon-washed roof, filled with the pride of strength, knowing there wasn't a man in the city of Marrakech who was willing to try grips with him. He was still naked, except for the scarlet cloth around his loins.

He saw my Uncle Flane and he cried out to him. Cried out taunting words.

For an instant my uncle thought of leaping across the little street and rushing the Arab, but he controlled himself as he remembered Thurland. For Thurland loved a fight, and Flane didn't wish to rob him of one.

"Wait five minutes!" shouted my uncle, and as he spoke, he started running back to the hotel where he lived.

Thurland and I were on the flat roof when Flane came racing back as if the devil himself was after him. "Come





The very juice of desire was in the tones of the dwarf as he chanted the song of the treasure of precious gems.

quick!" he shouted, looking up at us from the roof of the house next the hotel. "Come at once! The man is waiting!" "Who is waiting?" cried Thurland.

"Old Redskin!" answered Flane, and saying that, he wheeled and started back again along the way he had come.

"May the Lord help us!" gasped Thurland, and he dropped over the balustrade and followed his brother. And I, terrified and with fear in my heart, yet curious, followed the two of them.

We reached the Bab Aguenau, and there I saw the Arab Ahmed Mansour.

Thurland had caught up with Flane; and the two, running shoulder to shoulder, rushed the low balustrade and leaped clear over the little lane onto the roof where the Arab waited—a leap that surprised the Arab. But I halted beside

the sobbing poet, my heart pounding lest the fight should go against my uncle.

Flane was pulling off the light shirt that he wore, so that he would be as slippery as the Arab when the wrestler was trying for a grip; then, naked to the waist, "Come on!" he shouted. "I'm tired of your damned insults and challenges!" And saying that, he rushed.

His first spring threw the Arab off balance. Hugging each other, they rolled like a human wheel across the roof. They crashed against the low balustrade that was made of mud dried in the sun, and two full yards of it broke away and toppled into the lane below. And the noise of that falling wall woke the Kasba. In the dust below, people were running, and the night was full of cries of fear and anger.

Full forty feet above the lane were the Arab and my uncle. And so mad were they, that they thought nothing of the break in the coping, and the mud wall that cracked and crumpled each time their straining bodies came against it.

Cracked and crumpled and showered fragments onto the lane below.

The guard was out now. A detachment of spahis and fifty men from the Foreign Legion. But the baked mud clattering down kept them at bay, and the battle went on.

Flane would break the grip of the Arab when I thought the golden wrestler was choking my uncle to death; and the Arab would wriggle free from Flane when I was sure nothing in the world could get him free.

Once the Arab broke a hammerlock of my uncle's, and I heard Flane give a cry of wonder. "You're a good one!" he shouted. "By the beard of Cûchulinn, you're a great man!"

Down again on the roof, rolling over and over, smashing against the coping. Both mad as bulls, because they couldn't make the other pat the roof with the palm of his hand as a sign that he was beaten. My Uncle Thurland was running round them as they rolled. "Flane, the coping is down!" he yelled. "You'll fall into the street and break your neck!" But Flane heard nothing. He was working to get a grip on the slippery devil who twined himself around him, and his ears were stuffed with anger because he couldn't do it. For the cunning of the Arab was something to marvel over.

They crashed once more against the balustrade. A yard of it toppled, and as it fell, and the body of the Arab rolled outward,—as if to follow the piece of mud wall,—Flane made a quick movement and got a scissors hold on the head of the fellow. A scissors hold! The head of Ahmed Mansour was between the great thighs of my uncle, held there as tight as a hot coal in a pair of tongs. Tighter! For the golden body of the Arab had slipped over the edge! There he was, hanging above the street, the scissors grip of Flane holding him, and Flane himself being held by Thurland, who'd flung himself flat on the roof and grabbed the wrists of his brother!

IT would have broken the neck of an ordinary man, but Ahmed Mansour was no ordinary man. For a full five minutes my Uncle Flane held him there, while the spahis and the Légionnaires got ladders and thrust them against the wall—ladders and ropes and slings. And when they had put a sling round the body of the Arab, they pulled the big thighs of Flane from around his neck and lowered him to the ground.

Flane and Thurland came down the ladder, and they pushed the people back from the Arab, so that he could get air. And Flane bathed his face and held a cup of water to his lips. A very sick man was the Arab for nearly an hour, but at last he opened his eyes and looked at my uncle.

Then he put out a muscular hand to Flane. And they grinned at each other, not seeing the crowd that milled around them, for they were two men who were apart. And Ahmed Mansour spoke. "I have made a vow on the Koran that I would follow the man that beat me," he said slowly. "Follow him and be his slave to the ends of the earth!"

Flane glanced at Thurland who was standing by, and Thurland nodded. "You couldn't get a better slave," he said. "We want a good man. Why not?"

And that was how Ahmed Mansour, the golden wrestler, became one of our party on the strange trails southward; and a fine account he gave of himself, as I will tell later.

CHAPTER IX

THE HAIRY MAN

ON the morning following the wrestling-match we met the hairy man on the Place Djema El Fna. When he saw my uncles, he sprang from the side of a sand-diviner who had evidently been telling the future for him, and he rushed to Flane and Thurland, his words tripping over each other.

A strange fellow was the hairy man. His name was Blore, just Blore, and of what race he was no one knew. He had, at times, a look that made me think of a gorilla; but whether this feeling came to me from his powerful arms and his great strength, I don't know. And the hair on his body was so long that once, on the march southward, when it was wet after he had been in swimming, it lay upon his body with the same smooth sleekness as the fur of a seal when he comes out of the water.

Thurland and Flane, the moment they met Blore, turned on their heels, and with the hairy one between them, walked swiftly back to the hotel. We went into Flane's bedroom and locked the door, I with my eye to the keyhole, keeping watch to see that no one crept to the door and listened.

And mostly what was said that morning was said by the hairy man. Because

I had my back to him I couldn't hear everything; but what I did hear ran through my body like liquid fire. . . .

Blore, the hairy man, called it "the Thing." That was his name for the great treasure that my two uncles were seeking. A cluck came from his throat as he uttered the two words, a cluck like a verbal exclamation mark.

FROM a drawer Thurland pulled a map and placed it on the bed—a map of the Sahara Occidental, put out by the Minister of the French Colonies, drawn to a scale of one to four million and showing the western stretch of the Sahara from Marrakech down to Dakar in Senegal. A little fearsome in its printing: for there are great splashes of yellow that show miles and miles of sand, and other white splashes that haven't a word printed on them because there is nothing there but the skeletons of men and camels blown along by the Hamratta, the hot wind of the wastes, that the Arabs say comes directly up from hell itself. The Arabs may be right.

The blunt finger of Blore fell upon the map like a great black caterpillar, moving with the humping motion that caterpillars have. I leaned back from the door and watched that finger: it fascinated me. Dirty, grubby, it was crawling over the map—crawling blindly but eagerly, looking for a starting-point.

It found Marrakech, and the hairy one clucked approval. Then the finger was off, faster and faster, eating up the kilometers, Blore clucking as it moved—down into the heart of the Sahara.

By Taroudant and Tiznit! ("*Cluck, cluck, cluck!*") Swinging eastward by Tizounine and Ksar Chair! Then southward again, humping itself over miles of unmarked country toward an imaginary line drawn in red on the map, a line that showed the division between the unconquered flank of Morocco and the Rio de Oro. ("*Cluck, cluck!*")

Keeping to the westward of Smara—Smara, the nearly mythical town, ("The French have Paris, but we have Smara," say the dissident Moors.) In a line with Cap Bojador now, plowing southward over the patches of yellow and the patches of white that the little map-makers didn't know anything about. Not a thing! So they made a citrine splash or a splash of white, so that the world wouldn't know of their fine ignorance.

"For the map-makers of the world," as Thurland once said, "are little lads that

sit in London or Paris and know no more than the street they live in somewhere out in the suburbs. And that's the pity."

"Rio de Oro," muttered the hairy one.

A great name is Rio de Oro, a name to conjure with, one that sets the blood a-leaping. River of gold! One thinks of old Midas plunging into the Pactolus and the whole stream becoming golden.

The caterpillar finger plowed here and there, hunting like the snout of a pig that the cunning French send out after the things they call truffles. It flattened out so that my uncles and I thought it was smelling the very paper of the map; then, with a sudden leap, it sprang upon a spot and squirmed as though digging itself into the map, burrowing, as if the paper had something beneath it, something it desired.

Where the finger rested, the map was as white as the soul of a virgin. Three hundred miles away to the westward was Villa Cisneros, the little hell to which the Spanish Government sends political prisoners; to the east were the terrible sands running out for hundreds of miles till they met the Tanezroft, which is the Country of Thirst. Far to the southward was Mauretania, and below it again was Senegal. And if the devil himself had guided the finger of the hairy one, he couldn't have guided it to a spot more desolate in the whole wide world. That my uncles knew. For the finger of Blore only confirmed the knowledge that was already theirs.

"It's there!" said the hairy man.

The room was filled with a monstrous silence. Thurland and Flane leaned over the map and stared with slitted eyes at the finger of the hairy man. And I stared too—stared at the blank patch of the map that the dirty finger cavorted in.

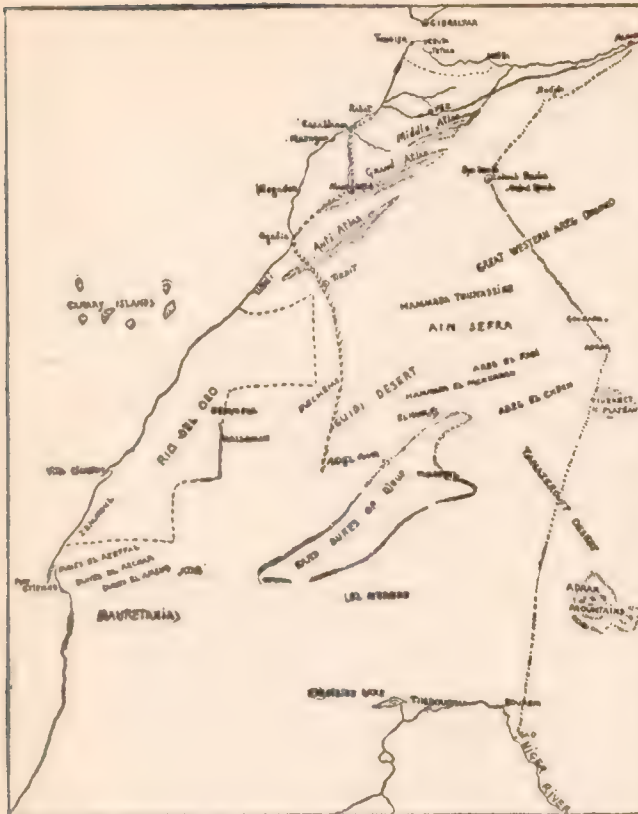
THEN—into that silence crashed a sneeze. Thurland, cursing, grabbed the door-handle; but the door had been locked, and I had taken out the key so that I could look through the hole.

"Quick!" cried Thurland, but the key dropped from his fingers as I handed it to him, and when he got out into the passage, there was no one there.

Puzzled, we came back to Flane's room. "Leave the door open," said Flane. "If he comes back, we'll see him."

So we left the door unlatched, Flane peeping through the crack between the jamb and the frame, hoping the listener would come back.

"Go on," said Thurland to Blore.



LEGEND

————— Route of the Authors
own journey across the Sahara;
to Timbuctou.

----- Route of the Adventurers
in "Caravan Treasure."



"That's all I know," said he, "—unless you would like to hear the song of the dwarf."

"What dwarf?" asked Thurland.

"A dwarf who lives in the Mellah," said Blore. "His home is down below Tiznit, and he sings of the Thing. He knows a song that was written by a Légionnaire who went hunting it."

Thurland went and spoke to Anastasia; then the four of us left the hotel to hunt for the dwarf. And Marrakech seethed around us. A strange wild town!

On that day I understood why the desert-dwellers cry for it. Spurring out of the wastes, they weep when they see the tower of the Koutoubia thrust up like a beckoning finger. For in the city of Marrakech there are fountains and shade and sweet drinks, and veiled women with strange eyes that look at men the way a cat looks at a mouse. And there is noise—noise, that the ears of the desert people long for. In the desert the silence is a great beast that trails after the caravans, eating up the grunts and snorts of the camels, and the songs of the camel-men, so that at times the men think they hear the crunching jaws eating the frightened sounds.

One following the other, the hairy man in the lead, we dived into the Mel-

lah, shouldered by the thousands that padded up and down the narrow streets, flattening ourselves against the greasy walls to let the laden donkeys pass. Donkeys carrying loads of green stuff, and earthen pots, and firewood, and bags of dried dates and grain. Donkeys whose hair had been worn off by the loads they carried, and whose skin was raw in spots, for in Marrakech there are hard hearts, and a man who would get six months prison in London for cruelty to his beasts considers himself a kind owner in that desert city. Life is hard on the fringe of the great sands, hard and cruel, and charity is unknown.

From one narrow street to another we went. Through one *souk* to the next. Brushed by all the filthy rags of beggars and buyers till we reached a hole in a wall and climbed through after the hairy man. Men were squatting on the ground, and guzzling a stew that we found later was made from the intestines of fowls, with a little meal and the tops of beets. And there in that dark stenchful place we found the dwarf.

He was very dark, much darker than an Arab, and although he was small in height, not more than four feet six inches, he was strong. And he was bright and brisk and cheerful.

Blore, the hairy man, spoke to him. The dwarf nodded; then Blore turned to Thurland. "He will sing the song now if you like," said the hairy man. "You might, if you wish, offer him a franc."

Thurland supplied the franc, and the dwarf immediately threw back his head and began to sing—to sing the song of the Woman with Golden Feet, composed by the Légionnaire who had gone southward and never returned.

The words of that song, as I came to know later, were a mixture of French and Temajegh, the latter being the spoken language of the Tuaregs, "the People of the Veil;" but the words counted little to me. It was the terrible rhythm that clutched me, the weird frightening croon that was in it—the longing and desire that was wrapped up in the words, a longing and desire so enormous that the listener's heart went out to the man who had threaded the golden words, went out and wept because he couldn't get what he wanted. All the underlying sorrow in the old chants of Ireland was nothing to the sorrow in the song of the dwarf. Nothing at all. For the song, written to the Woman with Golden Feet, told how the writer was willing to spend an eternity in the hell of the damned, to see her and the treasure she guarded.

BUT the dwarf sang as if he were the searcher, and when he uttered the French words *diamants, émeraudes, and perles*, he put such a fervor and a hunger into his voice that you thought of a hound drooling after a lost fox. The very juice of desire was in the tones of the little fellow as he chanted the names of the precious gems that lay hidden far to the southward. The hairy man clucked encouragement to the singer, and Thurland and Flane stood like statues listening—listening to something that had more proof to them through being in verse than it would have had in prose. For the ears of the Irish are made for rhythm; and a singer gets them, where the fine logical talker cannot hold them at all. And that is the curse of the country since the days of Brian Boru.

When the dwarf had finished, Flane spoke to Thurland.

"We must bring him along," he said. "That song will cheer us up when we lose hope. Make a deal with him. Blore has said that the home of the little fellow is somewhere in the direction we are going."

The hairy man spoke to the dwarf, and the little chap gave a cry of joy. He had waited for months and months, hoping that he could attach himself to a caravan going southward, and now Allah had granted his wish. He kissed Thurland's hand. He was his slave. He flung the franc at the man behind the pot of frightful stew, and followed us out into the narrow street. He wished to sing the song of the Woman with Golden Feet as we walked back to the hotel, but Flane stopped him.

"Keep it till we are in the desert," he said. "We don't want any more recruits. It's a song that would pull cripples out of their beds to follow us."

I don't know if it was the same with my uncles, but the streets did not seem so dirty or the beggars so frightful on the walk back to the hotel. When the dwarf chanted the song in the dark hole where they served the fearsome stew, the words seemed to light up the place. It had a magic power like an ancient rune. Perhaps I was excited and beside myself, but then I remember how it affected my uncles, who were two grown men.

We reached the hotel, and Thurland mounted to his own room while we sat together in the little hall. Flane had a list of matters that had to be seen to, scores of things connected with the journey; and he was checking these off to himself when Thurland came bounding down the stairs, his brows drawn, his jaw set in a way that showed he was not pleased.

He held something out on the palm of his hand, and spoke to Flane. "I found this on the table in my room," he cried.

Flane took the object from the palm of his brother and held it up. It was a coin, a coin the like of which I had seen before—long before, when my father had picked up its mate from the ground in the grove of young chestnut trees on the Green Tree Farm where Thurland had battled with the giant. It was a gold ruble!

CHAPTER X

WE TAKE THE TRAIL

THE finding of that coin in my Uncle Thurland's room changed the plans that had been already laid down. For it had been decided that Anastasia should stay in the city of Marrakech and await the return of Thurland, and there was a suggestion that I should stay with her

and keep her company. Little did I love the thought of waiting in Marrakech; so the finding of the coin, although frightening and eerie, pleased me immensely. For Thurland decided immediately that it would be dangerous to leave Anastasia in the city.

"There is a devil on our track!" he cried. "Her life would not be safe. She shall come with me."

Flane was silent for a moment, a little upset by the decision of his brother; then he looked at me and spoke. "Well, Jimmy must stay here," he said.

"Why?" asked Thurland; I silently blessed him for that snappy word.

"He'll hold us up," said Flane. "If Anastasia comes, there'll be enough trouble without taking Jimmy."

"Jimmy is strong," said Thurland. "Let him go. He's hankered for the trip ever since he listened to the tale that I told Michael. He's had the courage to come down here and find us, and I owe him something. This—this damn' coin frightens me. I wouldn't like to leave him here to have his throat cut."

"Let's ask Blore," growled Flane.

They called the hairy man and put the matter to him. Blore looked me over as if I were a camel that he was going to buy. He turned me round and punched me here and there with his big hands; he looked at my teeth, and examined the lobes of my ears.

"He can come if he wants to," he grunted. "He'll possibly be killed, but what matter?"

I grinned, and the hairy man slapped me so hard on the back that he knocked the wind out of me—a pet habit of his.

IT was then, with Flane checking off the names of the persons going on the expedition, that we got a surprise. "Thurl, Anastasia, Jimmy, Blore, Ahmed Mansour, this little singing chap, and myself," said Flane. "That's seven in all. Now we'll have to look up Ahmed Mansour. He promised to call here this morning. Did you see him, Thurl?"

"I didn't," said Thurl; and even as he answered, a wild-eyed boy dashed into the hallway and screamed "*Monsieur Spillane!*" at the top of his voice. "*Pour Monsieur Spillane!*" he cried. "*Un mot de la part du lutteur.*"

"Ahmed Mansour?" asked Thurland.

"*Oui, monsieur! Il est malade! Très malade!*" The boy was panting.

Thurland read the words on the much-fingered note and looked at his brother.

"He says some one has poisoned him!" he cried. "I must go. You stay here. The devils have caught up with us for sure."

I didn't know who were the devils that Thurland was thinking of, but I do know that the finding of the Russian coin, followed so closely by the news that Ahmed Mansour had been poisoned, brought to me a feeling of terror. The city of Marrakech was, to me at least, filled with a queer horror. I felt that murder stalked through the narrow streets, and the words of John Trench came to me: "The devil is plaiting a noose for your feet, Jimmy."

"Go and sit with Anastasia," said Flane. "And keep your eyes open."

ANASTASIA was fearful; I could see it in her great amethystine eyes. She asked if Thurland was in the hotel, and I told her he had been called out for a moment. I did not say what for; and I did not speak of the finding of the coin, lest it upset her.

"Jimmy," she whispered, "I wish that this matter was over. I am afraid to stay here alone."

"I think," I stammered, "I think you are going along."

"Going along?" she cried.

"That's—that's what Uncle Thurland says," I answered.

She was quiet for a time; then she took my hand and spoke in a whisper. "I dreamed at Algiers that I went," she said. "Dreamed it three nights running. And it was a terrible dream. A frightful dream. Yes, I knew I would not stay here. I knew." And we sat there looking out at the street below, not saying a word to each other, till Thurland came back—and fear sat with us.

Thurland was in a bad temper, but he said nothing to Anastasia about the note he had received or the coin that he had found in his room. Later I was told that Thurland had taken Ahmed Mansour to the L'Hôpital Maisonnave in the Dar el Beïda. The French doctors found that he had been poisoned by some drug that they were ignorant of, but they had worked quickly on him, and he was soon out of danger.

"He will be ready to leave with us," said Thurland. "We will start in three days. Blore and the dwarf are going ahead to Tiznit to see about camels and provisions."

A wild three days were those. My two uncles rushed hither and thither, buying

this and that for the expedition. They had great stacks of bills of the Banque d'Etat du Maroc, for the *billets* of this bank are good in the country of the Moors who have not been conquered by the French, the bills having Arabic words and figures upon them, that make their value plain to the rebels who hate the white conquerors. Revolvers and ammunition were purchased secretly, for there is a strict control over firearms in Morocco, and these purchases were taken out of the city at night by Thurland, and hidden along the road leading southward to Agadir and Tiznit. And it was all a little frightening and alarming; for the French are clever, and they were curious regarding the business of my two uncles in Marrakech—very curious indeed.

On the third day after the poisoning of Ahmed Mansour, a suave man called at our hotel and asked to see Thurland—a man with all the fine politeness of the French, politeness that often fools the folk of other countries. He was an inspector of the secret police, and he asked Thurland a hundred questions as to his business and the reasons for his stay in the city of Marrakech.

It was not the first time that my Uncle Thurland had been interviewed by the secret police, he having been mixed up in affairs that the police of many countries looked on with suspicion; so he made up a great story that completely fooled the Frenchman—a story that was so marvelous it made the detective open his mouth in wonder. For Thurland told him that an English nobleman, an earl or a duke or something, had been lost in the Atlas region some years before while hunting the wild sheep, that the French call *Mousson*, and that he and Flane had been commissioned to find the duke and bring him back.

"He's a special friend of the king," whispered Thurland, "and although some people in high positions know that he is lost, the rank and file know nothing. It would upset the politics of England if they knew; so for that reason we are working in secret. And now," said Thurland, bowing the inspector to the door, "I have told you everything, and I trust in your honor—in the fine honor of the French."

"But you have a lady in your party?" said the inspector, still a little doubtful.

"She is a cousin of the duke," said Thurland. "We thought he might have 'gone native,' and if he has, she is the



The strip of country into which we were venturing was, and is to this very moment, the least-known and most mysterious in God's universe.

only person who can get him back to England."

"I will make a report," said the secret officer pompously.

"Do," said Thurland, "and make it fine and beautiful. I love reports."

When the inspector went away, Thurland spoke. "We will clear out tonight," he said. "I know the French. They pretend to believe everything that a Britisher says, but they don't believe a word. That boy will make trouble if we're another day in Marrakech. They'll probably turn our noses northward and give us twenty-four hours in which to quit Morocco. It's myself that knows them."

THAT same night, in great secrecy, we left the hotel. Stealing away from it, one by one, and following each other at a distance. First Thurland, then Anastasia, then me, with Flane some fifty yards in the rear.

A moon hung over the Grand Atlas, a big yellow moon that flung huge shadows as we crossed the Place, making for the quiet corner of the Avenue du Gueliz, where Ahmed Mansour and a fast car waited for us. An occasional shambling native looked keenly at us, possibly link-

ing us together, and wondering why we walked in a sort of loose formation; but we reached the car without any mishap and climbed into it.

The driver was a friend of the golden wrestler. Thurland gave an order, and we moved out of the strange city of Marrakech by the opening called Bab Roob, and took the road for Agadir some two hundred miles to the southwest. From Agadir we would go to Tiznit some sixty miles southward, and there we would meet up with Blore, the hairy man, and the dwarf who sang songs of the Woman with Golden Feet.

Anastasia held my hand. Flane and Thurland were silent. The wrestler Ahmed Mansour sat beside the driver, and now and then they whispered together in Arabic concerning the route. Twice we halted to pick up packages that had been stored to await our arrival. Quickly and silently these bundles were tossed into the car, and we sped on through the night. The soft warm wind of the desert came up and questioned us; and the great rocks beside the road looked like evil things in the moonlight; and now and then a jackal howled. It was a strange land through which we fled southward.

The wrestler, who knew the country, called the names of sleeping villages to my uncles—queer names: Sidi Bou Zid, El Haiba, Jedida, Imi Tanout. You can see them on the map, small specks of no consequence at all, but strange and thrilling to me.

I wondered a little about Thurland and Flane and all men who are of adventurous ways. We were running through country that was hard and inhospitable. There wasn't a tree to be seen. Rocks, and land that was indecent in its bareness. A land that threatened you, a land that said quite plainly to a person with imagination: "Wouldn't it be better if you went away? Surely your own country is sweeter and greener than I am!"

IT was daylight when we came to Agadir, the town that squats beside the Atlantic; but we halted only to find the route for Tiznit. The driver asked a suspicious policeman near the markets.

"*Pour Tiznit?*" questioned the gendarme, peeping into the car. "*Ah, la route est bien mauvaise! Elle est dangereuse. Pourquoi allez-vous à Tiznit?*"

Thurland handled him as he handled the secret-service man at Marrakech.

Great was Thurland at making up stories—glamorous stories that he stuffed into the ears of listeners in a manner that made them believe them—for a few minutes at least; and that was all that Thurland wanted. Before the policeman had digested the bit of quick, colorful French that my uncle tossed at him, we were on our way. A rough road, as the gendarme remarked, for the country is the most newly conquered of French Morocco, it being part of Le Sous that stood up long against the conquerors.

"AND now," said Thurland, "we must step quietly and with cunning, for we are not wanted here at all, at all. The arm of France goes no farther than Tiznit; and the French don't like mad people wandering off to get their throats cut by the gentle folk beyond. Are you afraid, Jimmy?"

"No," I answered; but my teeth were chattering as I said the word. For we were rolling through leagues of country that was as friendly as an angry leopard. Land that hadn't had a wetting since the flood, that was grilled by the sun and whipped by winds that lifted the sand in handfuls and flung it at the poor trees that fought for their very existence. And there were mean little clusters of mud huts from which hungry naked children ran out on the roadway and screamed for alms as we went by.

We swung to the right before coming to Tiznit; and in a dry creek we left the car—Flane and Thurland, the wrestler and I, loaded with the packages that we had collected on the route. On foot we headed up the stony valley, and at the head of this valley we found Blore and the dwarf awaiting us. They had camels and provisions, and changes of clothes for all of us. For we were going to make ourselves as inconspicuous as possible, suspicion being a quick breeder in the wastes, with death following swiftly on its birth.

And the dwarf, whose name was Haila, was the only one who seemed happy, he having a wife on the road we were taking, a wife that he hadn't seen for a year. The rest of us were nervous, even Thurland and Flane, who seldom knew fear.

All that afternoon we spent in the silent valley, dressing ourselves in the Moorish robes. And the hairy man had bought a brown dye with which he stained the faces and arms of Flane, Thurland and myself. The veil swathed the face of Anastasia and hid everything



but her eyes. Very wonderful she looked in the silken robe and the *haik*—very wonderful indeed.

There was a strange quality in the beauty of Anastasia. Fear heightened it, and great terror brought to her face a glory. . . . That same glory brought us to trouble later.

CHAPTER XI

WHERE RIFLES RULE

THAT night, led by the dwarf and Blore, we passed to the east of Tiznit, our faces to the south. The silence was so great that we heard the notes of a bugle in the town that was fully two miles away—a bugle that sent the soldiers to bed, and those notes seemed a trifle sad and mournful to us. For when we passed one yard beyond Tiznit, we passed out of the protection of France and the civilization that France stands for. The gendarmes and the secret police might have worried us a little; but the dwellers in the mysterious country that we were entering would, we knew well, trouble us more. Quite a lot more.

"It's the rule of the rifle now," said Thurland, as we started. "The Tricolor we have finished with; and it's only God and a gun that will protect us from now on." He spoke in a whisper to Anastasia as he lifted her to the saddle, questioning her as to her fears; but she answered that she had none while he was at her side. Brave was Anastasia, the bravest of us all, because the treasure had no magic for her, and therefore did not blind her to the dangers of the road. . .

It was curious how our passing from the protected zone, into the wild lands beyond, affected the mental image we had formed of the Woman with Golden Feet. Not only in the case of Thurland and of Flane, but with Ahmed Mansour, the dwarf, the hairy man and I. While we were still in the country controlled by the French, the belief that there was such a treasure was attacked by common-sense that seemed to say: "If such a glorious thing is close, why don't these little hungry men go and get it?" But now common-sense was left sitting on the imaginary line that marked the limit of French occupation, and all the mad visions that a wild and unexplored country can bring rose in our minds.

While waiting in Marrakech, I had heard from my Uncle Thurland of the troubles that beset the French in the pacification of Africa—of the fate of adventurous men who had pushed their way into the country that lay beyond the bounds of French and Spanish influence. A number of these had fallen into the hands of fierce tribes in the interior, and had been subjected to tortures that a white man could hardly dream of, tortures that made the blood run cold. A Frenchman had stumbled into Villa Cisneros with his two hands missing; and a gunboat had rescued a white man from the shore southward of Cap Juby, so decorated with words from the Koran cut on his body with the sharp point of a knife, that he died an hour after being brought aboard. Fine cruelty have the dwellers in the Big Sands. The business of torturing comes to perfection in the lands of heat.

Now that we had passed Tiznit, all the things that I had heard seemed possible, and that belief made the existence of the Woman with Golden Feet more probable. For the deviltry and cruelty of the desert dwellers blocked the treasure-searchers that roam up and down the world. The strip of country into which we were venturing was, and is to this very moment, the least known and most mysterious in God's universe. It sits and grins at the people who try to subjugate it.

The deserts of Australia have been explored; Borneo has few wonders left; the South Sea islanders are pestered to death with missionaries and film people; but the country of the unconquered Moors is a fine black patch that sets the imagination guessing. There, of all spots in the world, can the fancy of man hop and bound to its heart's content; for there his lack of knowledge allows free flight to his dreaming.

There are airplanes flying over the land today; but the aviators look down with fear on the stretch between Agadir and Cape Blanco. They hug the coastline and pray that nothing will bring about a forced landing in the thousand-mile stretch that is the country of the gentle devils of the bad lands. If they are not immediately massacred, they remain for years as prisoners till their governments buy their freedom.

FLANE and Thurland had compasses; but the dwarf and the hairy man steered by the stars. There was a big moon that made the wastes quite plain to us, but there was no trail.

Three times in the night we passed piles of stones in the form of pyramids; and Thurland asked Blore if they were set there to mark the track. Blore grinned. They were, he said, set up to mark the graves of men killed in tribal fights, a stone for each man slain. "It's the custom of the country," he said.

"It's a merrier place than Ireland," cried Thurland. "I'm thinking we'll have lots of fun down here."

He laughed as he spoke, and the warm wind that gamboled around the plush-footed camels carried his laugh back to the gobbling silence that followed us; and it was eaten up so quickly that Thurland turned his head in wonder. Terrible was the silence.

Near dawn we passed a nomad camp where three "pancake" tents of much-worn hides were protected by hedges of

cactus and camel thorn. Four women and three men came out and screamed at us, running beside the camels and gibbering. The dwarf and the hairy man cursed them with shrill curses; but the seven kept with us for a mile. We were crossing a dried-up watercourse when they decided to give up the chase; and then the mad things pelted us with stones from the bed of the river. A stone struck Ahmed Mansour in the face, making a deep cut that bled fiercely. It was the first blood of the voyage. We were a little upset. There was something devilish and unreal in the clinging pursuit of the seven.

WE made camp at daylight on a bare plain. Far off we could see the mud walls of a village, the name of which, according to Blore, was El Beni. We put up the two tents in the center of half a dozen straggly palms. The dwarf strapped the forelegs of the camels so that they couldn't stray, and the beasts hopped around the camp, snarling and mumbling, their snakelike heads thrust out at every prickly bush that they found.

The sun came up and licked at the shadow patches. It was difficult to breathe. A tinted rock close to the tents became a molten fang. We drank coffee and nibbled at biscuits. The weirdness of the country put a hitch on our tongues. We were new to the wastes.

It was Thurland's idea to travel at night if possible, and rest during the heat of the day. Whether this scheme was prompted by fear of the people or with the thought that it would be less fatiguing for Anastasia I don't know, but we tried to keep to the night marches, although there were many occasions where flight from immediate danger forced us to push on in the hours of dreadful heat.

Blore spoke of the village whose ochre-tinted walls we could faintly see. He said its caïd was a terrible fellow. Once, so Blore said, he had captured a French officer and tied up his hands in such a way that the nails of the fingers were pressed against the flesh of the palms, and in that position, with the nails growing, he kept the officer for three months till his government paid a great ransom.

"Shut up, damn you!" cried Flane, for he saw that Anastasia, who was lying down within the tent, was not asleep and was listening to the story told by the hairy man. Blore was astonished. He thought himself a fine entertainer,

and he disliked being halted in his stories of the country through which we were passing.

"It would take a lot of talking to get Ireland to pay anything for our ransom," said Flane. "If an Irishman gets his head into a hole, he can stay there, as far as the people at home are concerned."

The hot morning rolled by like a chariot with wheels of flame. The water in the goat-skin bags was warm, and tasted queerly. Mirages appeared on the horizon.

Thurland, with his field-glasses, was watching the village; and about midday he saw a man ride out from an opening in the walls and gallop across the flat stony plains in the direction of our camp. We sat and watched him as he came nearer. When about five hundred yards from us, he pulled up his horse and sat in the sunshine looking at us. For a full ten minutes he watched the camp, then turned and galloped back to the village.

"What is troubling him?" asked Flane.

"We are not the people he is looking for," said Blore. "He's a little afraid to come near, lest we fire at him." After a pause he added: "It might be that he is looking us over with the idea of robbing us when the night comes down."

"We'll try and make him welcome," grinned Flane.

The glasses showed us the arrival of the man at the village. Half a dozen men came through the opening in the wall and clustered together as they listened to the report of the rider; then they retired.

SOMETHING strange and mysterious was in the happening—something to make me realize I was far from Ireland and the Green Tree Farm in Kerry. I pondered over the questions that the six might have put to the rider: The curiosity that bit them, the frightful curiosity of the lands where a stranger is an enemy with designs on the life and the goods of the residents. A man can go from Cork to Dublin, and no one will say "Who are you?" or "What are you doing here?" but in the land through which we were traveling, it was a different matter: a stranger spelled trouble, lots of trouble.

It came the hour of the grand mirages. The line of the horizon boiled, and there rose towers and turrets and fine spires

that the jinn of the wastes made out of the hot air. And there were cities of pearl with milky seas and floating islands, so plain that one would swear they were close to him.

Anastasia and I sat and watched them appearing and disappearing as if a magician were at work over a hundred-mile stretch of country. And a magician it was, in all truth. It was Africa working in the way she has to trap fools who try to conquer her. Fools like my uncles Thurland and Flane, and all the other mad adventurers that have fallen for the terrible lure of her.

THE night came down, black and frightening. And while we waited for the moon, Africa bit at us. Bit at us in the silent way that she has; the way of a serpent in the grass, the stealthy way of the assassin.

The tents and the provisions and the goat-skin bags of water were strapped to the strongest camel, and near him in the gloom stood the dwarf. We were all quiet, awaiting the moonlight, only the snorting and snarling of the camels fighting with the silence.

What happened then was a tragedy recorded in sound. For we saw nothing; yet our ears, taking the place of our eyes, told us what happened. Some one had hit the dwarf on the head with the flat of a sword; there was the thump of his body on the ground, then the rush of feet from our group as the loaded camel roared a protest against being pulled viciously from its kneeling position.

All this in the space of seconds. Then there came a terrible scream, the scream of a man meeting death, and the flash-light in the hands of Flane showed the hairy man running back to us. The hairy man, who had killed. In the spear of light I saw him, the flat short blade still red in his hands.

"Douse the light!" he cried. "Help me with the dwarf! Quick! He has been knocked senseless!"

Ahmed Mansour and Flane hoisted the unconscious Haila onto the saddle before Blore, the hairy one holding him there. Thurland put Anastasia on her camel, and the rest of us scrambled quickly on our mounts. Blore was clucking vigorously to give us a direction, and hurriedly we went forward into the darkness. Africa had started in pursuit of us—Africa the terrible.

The action speeds up to the tempo of furious and desperate adventure in the next installment—which appears, of course, in our forthcoming May issue.

Closed for the Season

*A brief but vividly dramatic story by the author
of "My Corpse Hangs in the Barn."*

By THOMAS W. DUNCAN

SHE was wearing high-heeled slippers, and they were no good for walking along this graveled road. The heels kept getting caught in heaps of pebbles. The country turnpike was very dimly lit by a quarter slice of moon, swinging low and red in the west.

She came to a gate and halted, not exactly frightened but certainly keyed up. Blocking the driveway a sign said, "CLOSED FOR THE SEASON," and beyond the gate she could see the dancing pavilion, boarded up, swathed by the thin mists of the autumn night.

A padlock secured the gate, so she climbed over. Following the park roadway, she walked on tiptoe, through heaped shadows of elms and red maples. Every few steps she halted, listening, peering about. On this night, Riverside Park was a place of ghosts. Through the trees she discerned the great white ghost of the Ferris-wheel, the sprawling white-ribbed roller-coaster, and the squat "fun-house."

But it was the dancing-pavilion that commanded her attention. The entrance, a double door of thin wood, was locked. From her purse she tinkled a ring of keys. The fifth one twisted in the lock. Cautiously she creaked open a section of the door.

She stepped into the black, cold-smelling interior and groped to the rail that fenced the dancing-floor. Then she waited—a minute, two minutes. Ghosts were here, too, ghosts of all the gallant notes of jazz that had sobbed from the orchestra through long evenings of summer. She heard the fast knocking of her heart and, from outside, the summer's last cricket, chirping weakly. She took a deep breath and started along the rail.

A footfall sounded at the entrance and she pivoted into the strong rays of a flashlight.

She caught her underlip between her teeth. "Turn it off—please. It—blinds me—"

"An' why should I turn it off?" The voice was middle-aged Irish. "What are ye doin' here, me fine lady?"

"Turn it off."

Man and flashlight came nearer. The torch played over her, the watchman's eyes cataloguing her.

That was difficult. Her age? Perhaps as young as twenty-three, as old as thirty. She had pure blond hair waved above a wide, classic forehead, but her nose and lips were almost heavy. Some day that would be a crass face. A rakish black hat lent her a *gamine* air. In the lobe of each ear she wore a cluster of three pearls, and her black dress had six froglike buttons running down the back.

Mike Shannon's free hand seized her wrist. "Come along, now. Bustin' into a peaceful amusement park in the quiet of the night!"

She jerked loose.

Mike Shannon blinked.

"I guess," she said in her low, rich voice, "I was a sap, all right. Mister, have you ever been in love?"

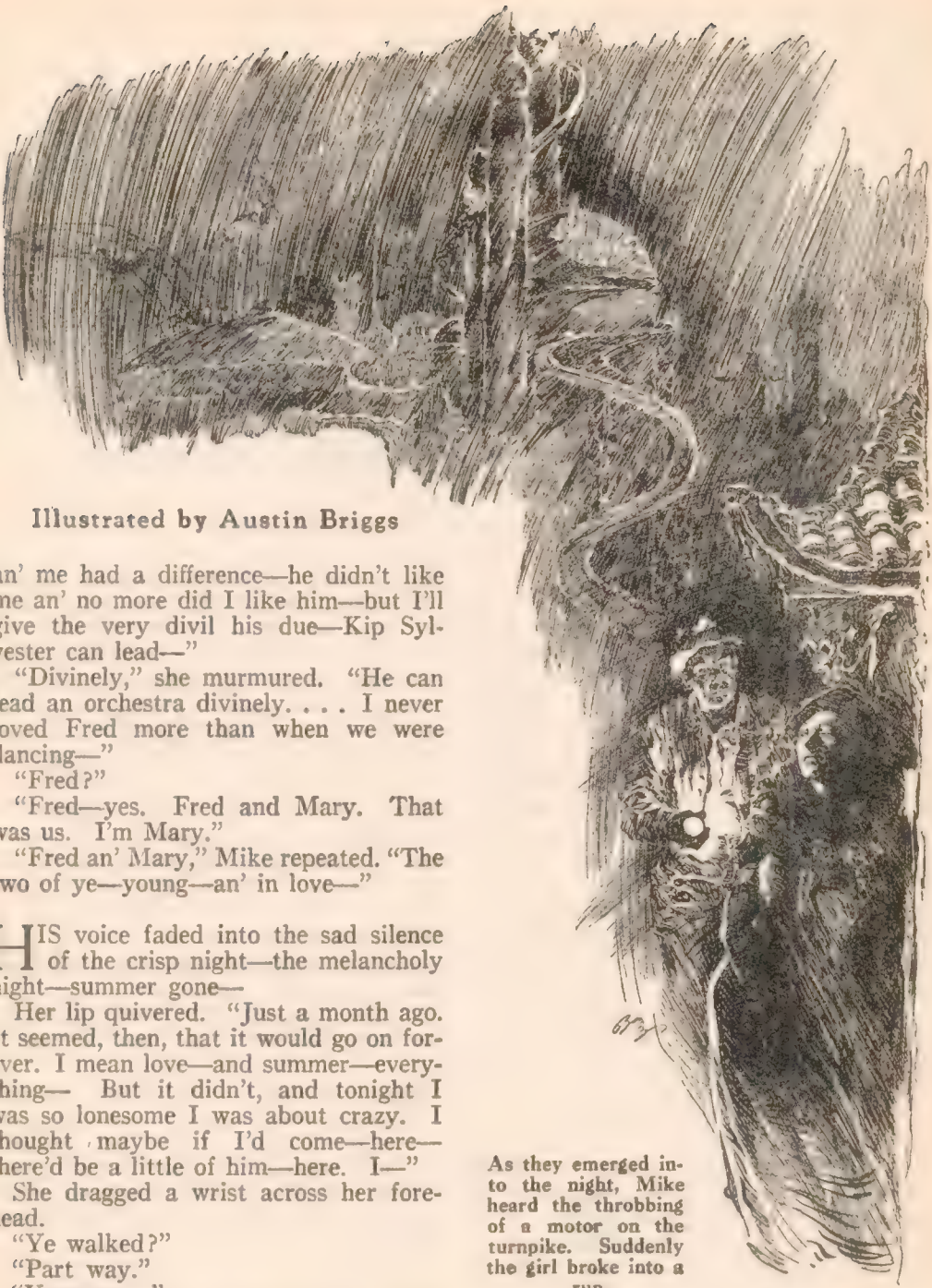
"Of course not. I'm a married man."

FLEETLY, she echoed his smile. "But you shouldn't joke about love. I—" She took a few steps, sank to the wooden bench running along the inner wall of the vast, empty pavilion. Slowly she said: "It was just a month ago. A month ago tonight—"

"Ye mean—ye danced here?"

"We did. He and I danced. The music—"

Mike nodded. "Kip Sylvester's orchestra. Ye can't beat 'em. I'm somethin' of a musician meself—a bit of a harmonica-player; an' I never tired of listenin'—all the summer. Kip Sylvester



Illustrated by Austin Briggs

an' me had a difference—he didn't like me an' no more did I like him—but I'll give the very devil his due—Kip Sylvester can lead—”

“Divinely,” she murmured. “He can lead an orchestra divinely. . . . I never loved Fred more than when we were dancing—”

“Fred?”

“Fred—yes. Fred and Mary. That was us. I'm Mary.”

“Fred an' Mary,” Mike repeated. “The two of ye—young—an' in love—”

HIS voice faded into the sad silence of the crisp night—the melancholy night—summer gone—

Her lip quivered. “Just a month ago. It seemed, then, that it would go on forever. I mean love—and summer—everything— But it didn't, and tonight I was so lonesome I was about crazy. I thought maybe if I'd come—here—there'd be a little of him—here. I—”

She dragged a wrist across her forehead.

“Ye walked?”

“Part way.”

“Ye mean—”

“I drove out from town—to the cross-road. Then I left the car. I walked the last half-mile. I didn't want to park outside. I knew the watchman would get suspicious. All I wanted was to come in and sit—and maybe play our piece over again—and I knew the watchman might— But you're nicer than I thought the watchman would be.”

Shannon chuckled. “An', lady, ye're nicer than I expected to find when I saw

As they emerged into the night, Mike heard the throbbing of a motor on the turnpike. Suddenly the girl broke into a run.

that door open. D'ye know what I thought?”

“What?”

“I thought ye was a thief.”

A weary smile twitched the corner of her mouth.

“You thought I was going to steal the piano?” she asked.

“No, not the pie-ano. It was just that I'm keepin' watch because of what

happened here the last night we was open. A week ago Saturday, that was. Maybe ye saw in the papers?"

"I haven't read—haven't looked at the papers, even. When you've loved, and it all goes to pieces in your hands, you feel too—too numb. . . . That's it—numb. Your mind, and—"

"If ye'd read the papers ye'd know why I was keepin' a close watch. . . . It's my idee that they hid it somewhere, right in here—"

"Hid? Hid what?"

"The Proud Elephant."

"The—what?"

"Not a real elephant, ye understand. That was the name of the pearl. But maybe I'd better tell ye the whole of it."

"I'd like to hear. . . . Do you mind—if I smoke?"

"If ye're careful of the ashes. It's ag'in' the rules, when we're closed—fire—but—I might have one meself."

SHE blew a long thread of smoke into the down-turned rays of the flashlight, watching it thin to cloudy blue.

"There was an heiress come here," Mike explained, "by the name of Karmel Lot. She an' a party of five others—a week ago Saturday. It was slummin' they was, she told the police, though why they should come to a respectable place like Riverside Park for that I aint figured out yet. Well, durin' a dance—the floor crowded like the dancers was sardines—*puff*—the lights go out. The place is dark as the cellar of hell."

"All the lights? The whole park?"

"All of 'em. Ye ask me an' I tell ye it was planned; it was a part of their schemin'—"

"This Karmel Lot's scheme?"

"No, no, no. The scheme of them that was after the pearl. But I'm gettin' ahead of meself again. All right, out go the lights. In the great darkness, an' all the dancers packed in like sardines an' beer, there's a scream. Ye'd thought it was bloody murder. . . . Well sir, after a bit the lights go on. The lights had gone off, ye understand, because somebody had jerked the master switch on the lead-in from the power line. An' when the lights come on, this Karmel Lot's pearl turns up missin'."

"Somebody stole it? One pearl?"

"It aint likely that it walked off by itself; an' it was a specially valuable pearl. She wore it on a silver chain hung round her neck, an' she says she felt

hands on her throat, an' the pearl an' chain an' all is gone, very fast-like."

"How valuable was it?"

"I'm not lyin', miss. The price she'd paid was thirty-five thousand dollars."

"Gosh—for one!"

"It was a particular kind of pearl. It was what they call a—*a* baroque. Funny name, I says. A baroque it was. An' it weighed close onto three thousand grains. Imagine wantin' to wear such a thing round your neck." Mike chuckled. "An' not only was it big, but it was natural. A kind of natural baroque. Famous as St. Patrick. It had never been worked on, except for the fittin' to the chain. It was just the way the Lord an' the oyster made it—a baroque pearl lookin' something like an elephant; that explains the name—the Proud Elephant."

"Thirty-five thou—"

Mike gave his head an oblique nod. "More than I'll ever be payin'! Well, right away we told the dancers to stay on the floor, an' when the officers came they examined them. A couple of police matrons examined the women, an' men examined the men. Every stitch, right down till they was wearin' nothing at all. They even examined me. But the Elephant keeps turnin' up missin'. An' that's all there was to it. Except the insurance company, I see by the papers, offered a thousand dollars as reward for the Elephant's return, but the Elephant aint come back. It remains a dark mystery, if ye ask me."

She dropped her cigarette, crushed it beneath a lofty heel.

"I see, now, why you were a little upset when you found me in here."

MIKE grinned. "An' I've been talkin'—"

She touched his wrist. "You've made me feel—better. I can't see why this place—why they would spoil it with robbery—There's been so much happiness here. Fred and I—"

"Ye had a quarrel, maybe?"

"He left. . . . No word—no letter. I can't—I just can't understand. We were happy, that night—"

"He'll be a-comin' back."

"I wish I could believe that. . . . We had one piece we called ours. I keep humming it and— Mister, could I play it? If the piano's here—"

"Yes, the pie-ano's here, but—"

"It might make me feel—better. The orchestra played it—our last night; the lights went all red and blue, and Kip

Sylvester—you know how he can lead—he played it.”

Mike’s voice was husky. “An’ what would the piece be, miss?”

“It was, ‘Lover, Come Back to Me.’”

THERE was a curious silence. “Well?” she said finally.

“That’s an odd thing, your likin’ that piece. It’s one of me favorites. I play it too—on me harmonica.”

She rose. “You don’t mind?”

Mike’s brows were silently knitted. She groped away, through the gateway to the floor. He heard her heels clicking across the polished boards to the orchestra platform.

“If ye need a flashlight—” he called. “I’m all right.”

He heard her climbing to the platform, and after a silence the music began. She could play. She could *play*. The piano strings came alive and out into the autumn night the notes winged—notes as melancholy purple as the night sky. She sang, too, her voice rich and husky. . . . Mike Shannon sighed.

Later, when the last plangent note had ended, he heard her heels on the floor again. He stood up and raked her with the flashlight.

“Feel better, miss?”

“Better—yes.”

He stepped in front of the door. His hand shot out and snatched her purse.

“Why! You—”

“I’m sorry, miss. It was such nice music. But— Can ye see against this light?”

“Yes.”

“Then ye can see this is a revolver in me hand?”

“Yes.”

“Me finger’s crooked on the trigger. Ye’ll stand still!”

Mike Shannon backed to the bench, carefully placed the flashlight where its rays would bathe her, and with his left hand snapped open the purse and groped within.

“It’s a pretty bit of jewelry,” he muttered. “An’ it looks sure enough like an Elephant. Though I wouldn’t say it’s worth thirty-five thousand dollars.”

The girl spoke in a low, bitter voice. “You—old—mick!”

“An’ it’s kind of sticky. Um-m! By the saints—it’s chewin’-gum on it! Ye must have been chewin’ gum that night. Was ye chewin’ gum a week ago Saturday?”

“You bald-headed old mick!”

“We won’t get nowhere by callin’ names, miss. Me hair’s thinnin’ a bit, that’s all. . . . Ye must have been chewin’—yes, an’ when the lights went off—he gets it—an’ gives it to ye, an’ ye take out your gum an’ stick the Proud Elephant to the gum, an’ then ye sticks it—where did ye stick it, miss?”

“You broken-mouthed old—”

“Where did ye stick it? The pie-ano? Under the pie-ano? Was that—”

The girl clamped her lips together.

Mike Shannon sighed. “An’ ye played so well. Me favorite piece, too. Ye ought to hear me play on me harmonica. But ye was wrong about Kip Sylvester playin’ it. Not a month ago he didn’t play it. Not since June. I used to have him play it every night, an’ then, in July, we had words. He undertook to criticize me harmonica-playing, an’ we had words. An’ after that, just for spite, he wouldn’t play ‘Lover, Come Back’ for love nor money. So when ye said ye’d danced to it here last month, I knew there was something funny—”

Mike stood up. He slipped the Proud Elephant into his pocket. That would be something to tell the boys—thirty-five thousand dollars in his pocket at one time. He snapped the purse shut and handed it to her.

“I’m sorry, miss. Duty is duty. I’m right behind ye, with me revolver.”

AS they emerged into the night, Mike heard the throbbing of a motor, on the turnpike outside the gate. And suddenly the girl broke into a run—a wild, awkward, womanish run.

Mike didn’t shoot. He didn’t even follow her. He could have perhaps overtaken her, but he didn’t try. He saw her getting nearer and nearer the gate; he lost her in the shadows. And later, just before gears clashed and the car raced away, he heard her voice for the last time. It was not so bitter now—there was a note of laughter in it, rather mocking, but still not bitter.

“You old mick—good-by!”

Thirty-five thousand in his pocket . . . But he was too sentimental for this job. After he told them he had come across the Proud Elephant stuck beneath the piano keyboard, after he had collected that thousand-dollar reward, he would maybe buy a lunch car—something like that. Call it the Harmonica Inn. Between short orders, he could play, and that should attract customers, especially those who loved music.

The American colony shares wild days in Paris—by the gifted author of "Cyrano to You, Gentlemen," and "The Pirate's Beard."

By FULTON GRANT

Illustrated by Austin Briggs



The Rebellion

SHE was the prettiest thing in Paris—but she came from Hackensack, New Jersey. Her name was Sally Farnsworth Buston. The Buston part of it was bestowed by her husband who was a reporter on the Paris edition of the New York *Star*. Jack Buston looked like a rather weak sister, and that was what we thought of him at first. He turned out differently, though. In the first place, he wasn't a newspaper man, really. He was an artist. He was one of those people who come to Europe to fraternize with the bunch who sit on café terraces and talk about Art, and occasionally go to sketch classes at Colorassi's. He only happened to be on the *Star* because he went broke and needed a job; and be-

cause the *Star* was not always particular. It is sometimes hard to get experienced reporters in Paris, and you have to take what you can get. . . .

How Jack Buston happened to marry Sally Farnsworth nobody ever figured out. She was beautiful, and he was plain. She was bright, and he seemed dull. She was clever, and he was slow. She was vivid, and a terrible little flirt. He was unimportant to look at, and unsocial. She was always *chic* and smartly dressed. He ran around in greasy corduroy trousers and a sweater until he got his job on the paper; and even then he always looked seedy. But Jack Buston was a likable fellow. He tried hard; he was conscientious. He was friendly, in a



of Small Fry

bovine kind of way. And eventually he got so he could write a rattling good story, slowly and carefully, if nobody bawled him out or hurried him.

I had never seen Sally Buston until the day Jack got his job on the *Star*, although they had been in Paris for some time. He came on the staff in 1932. That day, in the evening after the day-side copy was down and the day staff was quitting, Buston and Hi Meyers and some others, including myself, went down to the corner café for a drink. The boys gather there every night for an *aperitif* and to relax after the daily grind.

We went down through the press-room and around the back way to the Rue du Louvre. When we passed the front

entrance of the *Star*, there was a girl standing there, holding a wire-haired terrier on a leash. The girl, it developed, was Sally Buston.

She was quite tiny but she seemed, somehow, to take up a great deal of room. She was wearing a gray suit of the kind of cloth that some *couturier* had christened "angel-skin," belted with a solid metal band that hinged at the back and was about three inches broad, of polished chrome. She had sharp, delicate little features, like Dresden china except that they were very tan; and she had greenish eyes that seemed to be almost star-shaped. She also had a most carefully tousled head of curly blonde hair. Newspaper men notice such things.

Buston called out, "Hello, Small-fry! You here?" Then he ran over to her, patted the dog—who nearly knocked him over with terrier affection—took her arm and led her over to us. He was so proud! It was almost pathetic to see him so proud. And he was self-conscious and awkward and a little confused.

"These are some of the men on the *Star*," he said by way of introduction. "I don't know anybody's name yet. And this is Mrs. Buston." We shook hands all around.

THE girl looked at us with a twisted little humorous grin, and said:

"Imagine being called Mrs. Buston! Or can't you?"

Hi Meyers, who thinks he is a wit and a devil with the ladies, said he couldn't. The girl flashed that impish look of hers at him again and said:

"No, I thought not. But do you know any other little tricks?"

We all went together and had our *aperitif*. Mrs. Buston was absolutely charming. She was funny and gay and witty. She had a trick of twisting up the things you said and tossing them back at you, and she had a way of saying things that might have had several different meanings, or else none at all. You never were quite sure. It was like fencing, to talk to her. You never were sure whether she was kidding or not, nor whether she was just a jump ahead of you all the time.

For instance, I asked her if she had been long in Paris, trying to make pleasant conversation. She said:

"Long enough to notice that all Frenchmen are wearing somebody else's hat and shoes, and that most American women over here are wearing somebody else's Frenchmen. How long have you been here, or don't you notice things?"

She asked Hi Meyers:

"Tell me, Mr. Meyers, why do you carry a stick? You don't look decrepit. Physically, I mean."

Hi was proud of his rhinoceros-horn stick, but he hardly knew what to say. He muttered something about it being a rarity.

"Oh," she said. "And all you need now is an isinglass monocle, isn't it?"

She chattered on like that for an hour or so, half silly, half clever. She was very good company. We asked her how Jack Buston happened to call her Small-fry, and the answer she gave wasn't at all what you would expect.

"Two reasons," she said, grinning. "One is the obvious one, which I'm too conceited to use. And the other is because of my initials. If you garble Sally M. R. F. it makes *Small-fry*. And what do you suppose? He thought that one up himself. Isn't he sweet and clever?"

She was interested in the *Star*, too, but that was chiefly on account of Jack Buston. She asked all sorts of questions, and when she learned that his job was covering the boat-trains at the Gare St. Lazare,—not much of a job, of course,—she said:

"Anyhow, he'll never do any harm, will he? He's a terribly sweet thing, and of course your old paper will never appreciate him. I only wish I could afford to support him in the style to which he would like to become accustomed. I hate to see him working with you people. He might get to be a newspaper man, and then where would we be?" And then she leaned over and kissed her embarrassed husband, not caring a thing about us, nor what we might think of it. She was a natural little animal.

Suddenly she turned on me—I don't know why she picked me, either—and asked, perfectly seriously:

"Tell me, Mr. Brown: why shouldn't I go into the movies?"

There was no reason I could think of and I told her so, asking her why.

"Mr. Buston thinks the movies are immoral," she said. "He's such a sweet incubator baby. But I'm going to fool him. Wait and see. We can't live on his income, so I guess it's up to me."

Well, we did wait, and we did see; and that is part of what this story is about. However, that comes later.

WHAT happened that evening was that I took them to dinner. I had an idea they were both nearly starved for a good meal in spite of her cheerful manner, and bright silly remarks. I was right, too. We went to Posilipo's; and they did honors to a gallon of *minestrone*, half a ton of spaghetti, some stuffed veal, a huge salad, a pound of cheese each, all with *chianti*, tapering off with coffee and liqueur; even then they looked wistfully around at the sausages that were hanging there on the wall. But that dinner was important for other reasons. It brought me, so to speak, into the family; and it let me in for the excitement which was to come several months later. She started calling me Tony, which was O.K.

with me; and she insisted on being called Small-fry. As to Jack Buston, he contributed nothing to the conversation of the evening by thought, word or deed, except to eat forty francs' worth of food.

So much for the beginning.

IN this little drama the next act began when Small-fry went to Joinville, the Hollywood of France, and had a film test. She told Jack Buston about it, and he never thought she would make the grade. But she did. Jack was proud of her in a way, but he was dead against the movies. However, he thought Sally would just have extra parts and didn't worry much about it.

The shock came when the film "Martine" was released and made its appearance at the Pathé Theater. Small-fry was in that film. She didn't have a big part, of course, but she was spectacular. She was an *Apache* girl who belongs to an underworld tough, and her part was not intended to make her appear like a *jeune fille*. In the play she stabs the society lady who goes into the Paris by-ways looking for adventure, and finds it with the tough *Apache* boy-friend. But before the stabbing scene, Small-fry puts on a wild necking scene with her *Apache* that had everybody squirming in their seats. They put on films like that in France.

Well, it appears that Jack didn't know Sally was doing this part. And when he went to the opening and saw the heavy love-scene, he was pretty sore. Furthermore, Small-fry not only spoke good French in the film, but her pet-names and love-words were so natural—in French, mind you—that they were embarrassing to Jack Buston.

So they had a row.

Jack Buston tried to put his foot down and force Sally out of the pictures. Sally knew perfectly well that she had a "career" ahead of her if she used her head. Buston came to me with a long face and a longer story, and asked me to talk to her. He said she liked me and would listen to me. But Small-fry called me on the phone that same day, and asked me to meet her. She wanted me to talk to Jack and sell him on the idea of her becoming a star.

Imagine my embarrassment!

Jack Buston said: "She won't speak to me. She told me she'd leave me. She said I'm just stupid and jealous. Of course I'm jealous! I don't want those Frogs pawing her about. I don't want



"How's Jack?" Sally asked. "Doesn't he ever say anything about me?"

her running around with that movie crowd in Joinville. They're no good. They'll ruin her and make her cheap. She's only a kid, only twenty-two years old. She doesn't belong with people like that. I know she wants to help, and that we are having a hell of a time on the little money I can earn. I know I'm not doing any painting nor anything but writing those damned boat stories. Maybe I'm not any good, but I'm not going to have her mixed up in that bunch. I tell you, I can't stand it. I won't stand for it, either. I didn't say much when she wanted to do something. I thought she'd get tired of doing extra parts. I didn't think she'd ever get a chance. She's not French; she's American. I want her to stay that way. I don't want her to get cheap and sophisticated. For God's sake, tell her. I can't tell her anything. She won't listen to me."

All of which was very pathetic and just a little selfish and stupid. I tried to tell him that the movie crowd are not as bad as all that, and that Small-fry seemed pretty able to take care of herself. But I might have saved myself the breath.

Sally Buston said:

"Listen, Tony, I love Jack, and I'd do anything in the world for him; but I'm not going to be put in a glass case. We can't live on twenty dollars a week, and he can't do any painting on it, anyhow. And what's more, I'm not going to stand for his stupid jealousy. If I didn't love him, do you think I would have married him? I knew lots of other men who would have married me, believe me!" (I did, too.) "And I'm not going to be made an immoral hussy just because I throw a necking scene in the movies.



"I'm going to be a newspaper man. I'll show her!" said Jack.

"Now look here," she went on: "The whole idea of coming over here was for his painting. He's a genius. You can believe it or not, but he is. I know he acts dumb and slow, but that's just his way. He's got to paint. He can't help it if his income is cut off on account of the depression. It was nice of him to try to earn some money by working on your rotten old newspaper, but I won't have him staying there. And he's either going to paint or I'm going to leave him. If I make some money, he can paint. Somebody's got to wear the pants in this family, and whoever heard of a genius wearing pants? Now you tell him. You make him understand. Because if he makes another scene, I'll go away, and I will go into the movies—in a big way, too. I won't be ashamed of him. He makes me ashamed of him when he lets things stop him from working—painting, I mean. You can just tell him that."

All of which, as I said above, was very pathetic and just a little stupid and selfish. So there they were; and there was I, just nowhere at all.

IN the spring of 1933 Small-fry did another film. She took a French name which I won't mention just now, and she began to make a hit. This time it was

another roughneck part in a Frenchified gangster film, and the rôle she had was that of a "fallen angel."

The upshot was that Sally walked out on Jack Buston after a terrible scene. She packed her grip and walked out and left no address—for him, anyway. She did call me up; asked me to come to see her new studio in the Champs de Mars, and there I met ten or twenty movie people, male and female, but mostly male and French. She gave a little party, and she was a splendid hostess, witty and gracious, and just flirtatious enough and not too much. She spoke nothing but French, and she seemed to have learned the lingo as well as English. There was a big, good-looking fellow at the party named Bruno Kurd—a Hungarian, I think. He was a director and getting to be famous in Paris movie-land, and he was definitely and obviously in love with Sally Buston—except that he didn't know she was Sally Buston. The courageous but absurd little youngster pulled me aside and said:

"Don't you say a word, now. I won't be preached at. I won't hear a word about Jack, either. I've gone native, and I like it. You're the only American I know, and I can drop you too, in case you try and bawl me out."

I didn't try.

But the effect of all this on Jack Buston was pretty bad. He started to lose weight. He started making pretty serious mistakes in his work. I had to get some of the copy-readers who liked him to help me help him out. By that, I mean that we checked over his work every day—mail-boat lists and the few stories he did—before they went downstairs to the composing-room; and we caught his boners before they got him into trouble.

Then, worst of all, he started drinking heavily. Every newspaper man does a bit of drinking. We all go on a bust every now and then, but we try not to let it interfere with our work. Jack Buston didn't go on a bust. He just drank constantly every day. He told me that it helped him talk to people and took his mind off of Small-fry. Incidentally, that was the only time he ever mentioned her, and that was only because I had bawled him out for his drinking. But he would sit half the night in the Café de Flore and drink *pernods*, one after the other, and try pitifully to make conversation with some of the nice American girls who get to-

gether in that café. Then he would go up to Montparnasse, and finally fall asleep over the bar at the Dome. This kind of life made him look a T. B. case in about three months. It also nearly lost him his job on the paper.

But one day he changed.

HE came to the office with a glitter in his eye. He went to work like a Trojan. He brought in several stories and looked around for more. He asked to be put on the regular city beat. The city editor did it, too, just because we were pretty short-handed; and the youngster wrote some of the best stories of his career on the *Star*.

Curiosity got the best of me and I asked him what had happened. He said:

"Oh, nothing—except I'll show her. I'll never paint again, but I'm going to do something on this paper, and then I'm going back to the States and be a newspaper man. I'll show her."

Finally it came out that he had seen Sally on the street with Bruno Kurd. He had tried to talk to her, and Kurd had been rather insulting. Of course Kurd had no way of knowing that he was Sally's husband. However, it was a slap in the face for Jack Buston. It made him so mad that he just wanted to get away from Paris and France and everything associated with Small-fry. All in all, it was pretty good for him, even if it hurt.

For Buston stopped drinking. He showed us that he could really write a story. He brought in short features that were so good we cabled them to the home paper in New York sometimes. But he wasn't as friendly. He acted as though he were fighting mad with everybody in the world, including himself.

And then, eventually, came the terrible month of February, 1934.

Anybody who had read the newspapers knows about the street riots in Paris which came out of the Stavisky scandal. The people of France, the "Little People," had discovered that some of the Deputies, and other men they had elected to govern them and to protect them, were mixed up with a bunch of crooks and were protecting bandits like Stavisky. And the Little People went out into the streets and shouted the politicians down. There were bad mob scenes. During January several had been wounded and even killed, but the demonstrations overthrew the Chautemps government. Then, in February, Albert Daladier took the

Prime Ministry, and he fared even worse than Chautemps.

On February 5th, five thousand men—lawyers, clerks, butchers, priests, students, plumbers, doctors, ex-soldiers—men of every walk of life, but not toughs nor rowdies, went out and bawled out the Deputies, and especially Daladier. They fought the cops, tooth and nail. The cops were brutal. Hundreds of people were hurt. A French reporter named Vertex was knocked down by three cops, his face kicked in by their feet, and one eye nearly torn out of its socket. The cops were afraid of press opinion, and gave the reporters a very bad deal.

And on the morning of February 6th, which has gone down in history as "Bloody Tuesday," we all awoke feeling as though we had been sleeping over a mine of T.N.T. There was revolution in the air. We expected things to pop. People looked around corners at each other. Blue-coats were everywhere in mass formation. A regiment of machine-gunners had marched through the streets, a silent but eloquent warning. Nobody dared to breathe. It was pretty awful.

AT noon that day Sally Buston telephoned me. She was worried, and wanted to see me. I hopped a cab and drove to her studio.

"What's going to happen?" was the first thing she asked.

"God knows," I said.

"Is the *Star* covering the riots?" She meant, were our reporters out on the streets getting local-color stories. I told her they were. And I could see that she was frightened stiff about Jack Buston. I knew right then that Small-fry loved that husband of hers, no matter what she did otherwise.

"How's Jack?" she asked.

"Oh, he's all right." I didn't like to talk about him.

"I hear he's getting to be—well, getting pretty good."

"He's a good reporter," I told her.

"I suppose he's—he doesn't ever say anything about me, does he?"

"He doesn't talk much," I said.

"No?" she said.

Then I tried to get information.

"How're the movies?" I asked. "I haven't seen you in anything."

"René Clair offered me a contract," she said. "He wants me to play a second lead in a Dekobra story. It's my big chance over here, but—"

"But what?"

"Well, I guess I'm—I'm tired of France, Tony. I want to go home."

She was like a little girl, all of a sudden. A little girl who just wanted her mamma. I pulled a fast one on her. Maybe it was a little cruel, but I wanted to know what was what.

"How's your divorce?" I asked her, and she almost jumped down my throat.

"Tony Brown!" she gasped. "What do you mean, my divorce? Who said I was getting a divorce? I never—or is Jack?"

She grabbed me by my coat. She was crying a little.

"Is Jack divorcing me? Tell me, Tony, *is* he? Tell me—"

"Not that I know of," I said; but I knew where we stood then. . . .

We went to lunch together. She told me a lot about her movie experiences. She even told me about this Bruno Kurd fellow. Said he was trying to marry her—or something. Said she didn't like him. She didn't like anybody in that Joinville crowd. She flirted with them and used them all until she got what she wanted to out of them, which was a boost. She didn't tell me the whole story about Kurd, either; but I gathered it wasn't pretty. She kept making vague leads about Jack Buston, but I didn't want to talk about him. I wanted her to do something about Jack.

Jack Buston, sent out to cover the story of the rioting, had been trampled under the hoofs of a mounted policeman's horse.



I left Small-fry about two o'clock and went to the office. Hell broke loose in Paris about five o'clock. Thirty thousand angry marching men moved from different points of the city toward the Chamber of Deputies, and they had grim jaws and blood in their eyes. If Daladier didn't resign that day, there would be a revolution in France which would have made the Reign of Terror and the days of Robespierre look like a pink-tea party, and we all knew it.

Every man available on the *Star* was sent out into the streets to cover the rioting. It was a dangerous job, too. But we wanted a big story. It looked as if that night would be one of the turning points in the history of democracy. And Jack Buston was one of the men on the job that night.

At about seven o'clock, Sally Buston appeared in the office. She was crying and trembling. She wanted Jack. She was frightened stiff, and when she learned that he was out on the streets, I thought the poor kid would have hysterics.

"Oh, Tony," she said, "I've got to find him! Please come with me and help me find him. Oh, please!"

I did. I could see that she would go out alone if I didn't, and that would have been pretty dangerous.

I made her eat some dinner first, though; and the shocks of the evening started right then. We went into a little café-restaurant and ordered something or other, but we had hardly got seated when the rioting broke out all around us. You could hear the shouts of crazy students. People were screaming and being beaten up by the cops. You could hear the crash and clang of iron grilles that the rioters were tearing up from around the boulevard trees and throwing at the cops. You could hear breaking glass and the crash of city busses being overturned, and the constant din of fighting. There was a low rumbling roar growing all over Paris.

THEN the door burst open, and two young lads came running in, their faces streaming blood. Right behind them were three blue-coats, yelling. Somebody turned off the lights. Everybody sympathized with the rioters. *Crash!* It seemed as though all the dishes in the place were broken. *Crash!* That was a plate-glass window. Another crash. A scream. Another. Scuffling and fighting. Yelling. Dark forms fell over our table and upset food all over us. Bodies were

rolling about and falling with a thud on the floor. Then it was suddenly quiet. Lights went up. The unconscious body of one of those students was in the middle of the room, bleeding badly. A girl at a table was holding her head and moaning. She had been hit with a club.

I TOOK Sally Buston out of there. I knew Jack would be at the Concorde. Sally wanted to go there. Frankly, I was afraid for myself as well as for her. But she would go; you couldn't stop her. So we went.

A solid marching column of men, twenty abreast, stretched from the Chatelet to the Concorde. They were unarmed except for their canes. They were singing the Marseillaise. It was tremendous, that marching song. "Forward, men of the Fatherland! This is our day of glory! The tyrant's banner is lifted against us! March on! March on! Soak our plowed furrows with his poisonous blood!" Ten thousand hoarse fanatical voices. Magnificent, terrible.

At the Concorde there was war. Just war. We crawled in front of the Hotel Crillon, hiding behind the stone columns.

In the Place, twenty thousand men were milling, screaming and fighting. Mounted blue-coats, with their sabers drawn and slashing, charged that mob. Razor-blades on the ends of citizens' canes cut the hamstrings of the horses. Horses screamed—screamed like women in agony. Men and women and children were trampled under the hoofs of the riders. The mob surged. The horsemen were pushed back. They charged again. They were driven to the bridge. Policemen were pulled down and were nearly torn to pieces by the mob. Two auto busses were overturned and in flames, and the flames made an eerie glow over everything. The madmen of the crowd were dancing like insane ghouls around the flames. They were yelling:

"A bas les députés, voleurs! Down with the crooked Deputies! A mort Daladier! Death to Daladier!"

Small-fry ran out into the Place. I ran after her. She saw a body lying still on the pavement. "Jack! Jack!" she cried; but it wasn't Jack. She ran away from me and joined the terrible crowd. "Jack! Jack Buston!" she was calling out. Nobody noticed, or heard her, in the din.

Then, suddenly, there was a spluttering noise. *Rat-tat-tat-tat!* It was gunfire. The police had fired into the crowd. A woman screamed on the balcony of the

Crillon. It was a servant, killed by a ricocheting bullet. Dead silence. The mob was stupefied. Then they tore loose. They rushed the horsemen. They drove the Law across to the other side of the bridge. Insanity gleamed in the faces of maddened men and women. In the light of the flaming busses they looked like fiends. *Tat-tat-tat-tat!*

Men fell down. The cavalry charged again. I grabbed Sally Buston in my arms and ran. We hid behind the pillars of the Crillon. Bullets whistled. Men and women screamed. Bodies lay all about. The feet of the raging thousands trampled them. The mob broke and ran before the gunfire.

I pulled Sally with me around the corner of the Rue Royale. We didn't have a chance at the Concorde. A flying wedge of armed guards tore down at us. They knocked us down. Sally was hurt, but not badly. My own face was cut from somebody's foot, but I crawled out and got to my feet. I dragged Sally, screaming for Jack, into Maxim's café. Bodies lay everywhere—on the bar, on tables, in seats. There was blood on the floor. Waiters, uniformed bell-boys, the manager's wife, even the little *cocottes* were working over those bodies, bandaging, washing wounds, giving first aid.

We went far inside to have a drink. Suddenly Small-fry gave a frightened little scream. She ran over to a table where a man sat slumped in his chair, his hair sticky with blood. It was Jack Buston. He was a mess. He had been trampled by a horse. His left arm was broken, and his clothes nearly torn off. He was clutching his police-card in his hand, but he was unconscious. Small good that card did him!

Sally didn't faint. She went to work. She washed him and bandaged him and kissed him and mothered him and cried over him. When he opened his eyes and saw her, the expression that came over his face made me turn away.

"Hello, Small-fry," he mumbled, trying to grin. "You better go home."

But the next minute his good arm was around her, and they were saying stupid sweet ridiculous things to each other. I went away and finished my drink alone.

WHEN the worst of the rioting let up, toward eleven o'clock, Jack Buston wanted to go. He said he had to go back to the office and do his story. Nothing

could make him stop, either. I offered to write it for him; but no, back he went, one arm in a sling and the other around Small-fry, who just came right along with him.

And that night Jack Buston went back to Sally's studio with her. They were clinging to each other in the taxi; they could not bear to be separated for even five minutes, it seemed.

THREE days later they sailed for America.

Small-fry telephoned me.

"You better come down to the Saint Lazare station," she said. "On account of we're going home."

I went down. Sally Buston explained herself this way:

"You see, Tony," she said, "Jack wants to go back, and I've made enough money in the old movies to pay for our passages. After all, Jack can paint just as well in the States as he can here. I'm quitting the pictures. I think the woman's place is by the sink."

If the Fate Sisters were modern young ladies, they would have said in chorus: "Oh, yeah?"

Do you remember the picture called "Paris Underworld?" Do you remember a pretty little "French girl" who played the lead? She was an *Apache* girl who got "saved from herself" and from the naughty Paris underworld by a handsome American tourist. Do you remember how the publicity spoke about the new "discovery" of that little French girl, named Marie Amour? Well, Marie Amour is Sally Small-fry Buston. She is now "colossal, stupendous and astounding," in the best Hollywood tradition.

And here is a Hollywood "personal" from the Los Angeles *Examiner*:

The nicest party of the season was given by the lovely green-eyed little lady from France, Marie Amour, last Wednesday. Miss Amour and her husband, the prominent newspaper man John Buchanan Buston, entertained no less than four hundred of Hollywood's "Four Hundred," and she charmed everyone just the way she does on the silver screen. She said that her husband is something of a painter, too, which makes a complete family of artists. He has nearly completed a portrait of Miss Amour which will be shown at the San Francisco Academy show this winter.

So what?

Another brilliant story by Fulton Grant—with the scene laid in South America this time—will appear in an early issue.

Illustrated by
Monte Crews



"You monkeys will never be old enough
to put anything over on me."

A Bluff and a Prayer

A lively tale of Tiny David and the State Police.

By ROBERT R. MILL

"GETTING to be just like a blooming Rotary Club meeting."

Sergeant James Crosby was the author of this expression of disgust. His tirade was aimed at the monthly meeting of the sergeants of the Black Horse Troop of the New York State Police, which had just adjourned.

There had been discussion of some of the problems encountered by the said sergeants—upon whom, in a sparsely settled territory, depends the success or failure of a police organization. Captain Charles Field, commanding officer of the troop, had appeared briefly to give sage words of counsel.

Now, with the business of the meeting cleared away, the wearers of the three stripes hung about the living-room of the barracks to exchange talk of shop before taking to the road, bound for their various stations.

It was here that Crosby held forth: "Next thing, they'll have us singing, 'I'm a Little Prairie Flower, Growing Wilder Every Hour,' or some gush like that! Then we can start forming committees to call on sick members, arrange for the annual Ladies' Day, and spread the true spirit of the organization. If you ask me—"

He checked the tirade as a tall, broad figure darkened the doorway, and Lieutenant Edward David entered the room. The group waited until he was well upon them; then they apparently discovered his presence for the first time, and saluted dutifully and smartly.

Lieutenant David, who never would be known otherwise than as Tiny to these men, some of whom had taught him the rudiments of police work when he was a raw rookie, surveyed the gathering with interest.

"This outfit," he declared significantly, "will soon have a new lieutenant."

"Just like the Bible," Sergeant Henry Linton ventured. "The Egyptians were smitten—or should I say smote?—with plagues; then they had more plagues."

Sergeant Crosby registered concern.

"So they caught up on you? Too bad." His face brightened. "At that, you got away with it longer than we thought you would."

CALMLY David ignored the byplay. "Lieutenant Seaver goes to White Plains. Albany told the Skipper that if he could pick one of you birds with some signs of a normal intellect, and if he cared to take the responsibility, he might pin a silver bar on you and see what happens."

There was a thoughtful silence. Sergeant John King broke it:

"The pay is attractive, but the job has a certain stigma attached to it. Of course, with a different type of men, it may be possible to live that down—in time."

Sergeant Linton reached a decision:

"Not interested. Jim Crosby has the job cinched. He will look good in the uniform; he already has the habit of getting other people to do his work; and he knows just enough to keep his mouth shut and not show how little he really does know. You can't ignore those qualifications."

"Yes," declared Trooper Richard Porter, who had entered in time to hear the listing of Crosby's ability, "they can't ignore things like that. Look at all you sergeants."

This interruption was greeted with the contempt it deserved.

"Was there something?" asked Sergeant Linton, and his voice was icy.

"Yes," Trooper Porter admitted, "there was something: Are we going to start back to Dannemora and get some police work done, or are you going to stay here gassing like the gang at a Ladies' Aid meeting?"

"Sit right in the car," Linton ordered. "When it starts, you'll know we are on our way back." He turned to his brother non-commissioned officers. "I always try to make things simple for him." His voice was kindly.

They dispersed slowly. In the hallway, Crosby cornered Tiny David.

"Leaving the kidding aside, Tiny, what are my chances?"

The big man pondered.

"Good," he admitted. "You're a smart cop. You know your law. You can handle men. Only two blots on your otherwise spotless character: you are inclined not to pay enough attention to the small stuff, and you'll drop anything if you see a chance to get in some high-grade clowning."

Mr. Crosby displayed some resentment.

"Seems to me I've had plenty of support in most of my clowning."

"You have," Tiny David admitted. "And a look at my efficiency report would convince you that it hasn't helped me along my weary way."

Crosby nodded.

"I get it. Use as much care and enthusiasm on petty larceny as I would on first-degree murder. And skip some of the kidding."

He gazed intently at his companion.

"Are you in my corner, Tiny?"

Tiny David's voice was gruff:

"Didn't think you had to ask that, Jim. We both did our first patrol together. You had a hand in all the stuff I ever broke. It was just luck that they pinned the bar on me, and there only was one to hand out. Now there is another one. Go out and get it, Jim."

Crosby nodded. "I'll sure try."

"And I'll try to throw some jobs of work your way," Tiny David promised. "Where you stationed now?"

Crosby's smile contained bitterness.

"Deerville. Population: two hundred forty-six—no, that was before Lute Hawkins went to Utica. The correct and revised figure is two hundred forty-five, providing Mother Gauthier is still alive, but she has double pneumonia. Seasons: July, August and winter. Industries: living off tourists in the summer, and each other in the winter. We thought we had a robbery last month: Herb Billings missed his blind mare, but it turned out that Jake Pauling had just borrowed her. Big relief when we solved that."

"I know Deerville," Tiny David agreed. "It isn't very promising." A crooked grin played over his face. "We will see what we can do."

A slight shadow crossed Crosby's face.

"Don't promote anything, Tiny," he begged. "Every time you do, I land in the stables. And they don't look there when they are picking lieutenants."

THAT was the beginning of the race, the progress of which was recorded by the arrest slips that came to the barracks from the various patrols. They



Crosby approached the aged man with a smile. "How about taking a little ride with us?"

were brief, laconic accounts, couched in official language, which served only partially to hide the intelligence, the tireless work and the courage that had made possible some of the results obtained.

It was a free-for-all, with no favors asked, and no favors given. Participating in it were all the sergeants in the troop, and those who had scoffed the loudest when the prospect of promotion was announced, were leading contenders.

There was only one exception: Max Payton, the veteran top-sergeant, who was the logical choice for the job, was eliminated because of his own wish to remain in his present position, which made it possible for him to escape long days on the road.

FOR a time it was a nip-and-tuck struggle, with the entire field in the running. Gradually, however, the very zeal of the contestants caused them to eliminate themselves. One man, who was recently transferred from another troop, had the mistaken notion that an order to produce covered volume of work, and not quality. He turned in a pack of arrest slips that furnished work for three clerks.

Captain Field, who was following the friendly contest with keen interest, snorted when he saw them.

"Pestering the public," was his comment, when he sorted through the forms. "Anybody can go out and pick up a lot of technical violators of some law or other. Most of these cases could be settled better for all parties concerned with a word of caution or a reprimand."

He turned to Sergeant Payton.

"Bring this lad in for a session in the stables."

At the end of the second week Crosby and Linton had pulled ahead of the field. Linton turned in a well-worked arson case, the result of an investigation after what had appeared to be a fire not of suspicious origin. Plenty of leg-work had developed the fact that the proprietor of the burned store had owned two other establishments, both of which had been the scene of fires. All three establishments had been insured to the limit. Judicious questioning and bluff had done the rest.

Crosby, ignoring the handicap imposed by his territory, had been equally busy. His keen eyes had spotted a youth with flashy new clothes, plenty of money to spend and no visible means of support. That trail led to the discovery of a depot used by a downstate ring dealing in stolen cars. The arrest of the youth and his confederates followed.

Captain Field beamed.



Tiny David asked casually: "Has there been any insanity in your wife's family?"

"Good lads," was his verdict.

"Yes sir," Tiny David agreed. "You could decide it by flipping a coin; and no matter who won, we'd get a good man."

All the while, in the sleepy hamlet of Deerville, Sergeant James Crosby was setting a pace that caused Trooper Walter Myers, a rookie who was paired with him, to weaken under the strain. They were out on the roads at daybreak. They patrolled every settlement in their district. Meals were snatched on the run. Nights brought no respite, for there were public dances to be policed, places of assemblage to be inspected and other duties that took them abroad.

At last Trooper Myers was moved to open protest.

"Maybe they'll pin a silver bar on you," he admitted; "but long before that, some undertaker will be putting flowers around me. How about a little rest?"

Sergeant Crosby grinned.

"That's what I'm working for," he asserted. "What have you ever seen a lieutenant do except rest?"

"What does that get me?" was the practical objection advanced by Trooper Myers.

Temporarily, Crosby was at a loss, but he soon rallied.

"It keeps you in a spot where you can put your hand in the taxpayers' pockets and pull out meals, clothes, a bed and some spending-money—not to mention bringing you in contact with men who should be an inspiration to you."

"But I'm with you most of the time," Myers demurred.

Crosby's glance was bitter.

"When I was a rookie, I did as I was told and asked no questions."

"You were turned in seven times on your first patrol," asserted Myers, who had absorbed troop history, which included record accomplishments of various sorts. "Only reason the Skipper kept you was because he was curious to see what other trouble you could get into. And seven reports are seven more than I have against me."

"Six more," Crosby corrected. "Your first goes in tonight. Keep on gouching about doing a little work, and you'll tie me."

WHEN they halted for lunch at a country hotel, they were told to call a certain number on the telephone. The call completed, Crosby returned to the dining-room, where Myers had just disposed of his second piece of pie.

"Got to go to Dark Lake. Belton, the district attorney, wants us. Maybe we get some business."

Mr. Myers, as is often the way with young troopers, was inclined to be blasé and cynical.

"More likely he wants us to hand some hick a summons for jury duty."

Mr. Crosby dismissed that possibility with a wave of the hand.

"Even if he was to lead us to an A-1 kidnaping, I still wouldn't like him. There is something about that guy—"

The dislike, and the fact it was mutual, were evident when the two men met in the office of the county official.

"I called your barracks," said Belton. "Lieutenant David told me to get in touch with you." He produced a folded legal document, and handed it to Crosby. "Commitment of an insane person to the State Hospital. Signed by Dr. Hookby, the health officer, and all in order. Can you serve it at once?"

Crosby shrugged his shoulders.

"Don't see why not."

"Very well. Clater is the name. Live on the outskirts of the village, at the other end. Very sad case, but not violent. You shouldn't have any trouble."

Crosby pocketed the document.

"Bring you the receipt tomorrow," he promised.

A block away he halted the troop-car, produced the form, unfolded it so the name written in the first blank space was visible, and read it aloud:

"Clifford P. Clater." He returned the paper to his pocket. "All right, Clifford. You get a nice ride of about ninety miles. But while I am reeling off those ninety miles, and the return trip, Linny is liable to grab himself something that you can enter on the credit side of the ledger. But that isn't Clifford's fault, poor devil."

"What's it all about?" demanded Myers.

"A nut," Crosby explained. "We are elected to deliver him to the factory." He waxed confidential. "Your Uncle James will show you the approved technique. Work fast, so they don't have a chance to rally their opposition—if any. Clothes and other items can follow later. The main thing is to get your nut, and to get him crated. You just watch your uncle."

They found the house without trouble, and halted the car. An aged man was raking leaves in the front yard. Crosby approached him with a smile.

"Clifford Clater live here?"

The smile of the old man was cordial, if a trifle vacant.

"Reckon that's me."

Crosby fought back his distaste. Jobs of this sort were not at all to his liking.

"How about taking a little ride with us?"

The little man showed delight.

"Like it right well. Think I need a coat?"

"No," said Crosby, "there is one in the car you can use if you feel cold. Go down and look it over while I slip into the house and tell them you will be gone for a little while."

"Nobody there but Maw," objected the man. "She don't pay much attention to me, and I don't pay much attention to her. Besides, she's looking out the front window right now, and when she sees me go off with one of you fellows, she'll know it is all right."

Crosby shrugged his shoulders.

"Good enough," was his verdict.

THEY seated him on the front seat between them. The car started off.

"Nice day for a ride," said Crosby.

"Yup," Clater agreed. "You fellows have come about the commit', aint you?"

Crosby showed his surprise.

"Why, yes," he admitted.

Their passenger nodded.

"Mr. Belton and Dr. Hookby said you would be here. I aint exactly been looking forward to it."



Clater chuckled. "Old man Hepton was a sight too smart to suit lots of folks!"

"It isn't the pleasantest thing in the world to look forward to," was Crosby's admission. "But when things like this come, we just have to grin and take them."

"Reckon so. That's what Mr. Belton and Dr. Hookby said. But it's hard, just the same. Forty years Maw and I lived together. Only the last year or two, that we aint seemed so close as we was."

Crosby's voice was suspiciously gruff.

"It is hard. I know you will miss her."

"I sure will, Mister."

There was silence. It was broken by Trooper Myers, who started a political discussion, in which their passenger took a rather half-hearted but not unintelligent part.

Sergeant Crosby had little to say as the miles were clocked off. His heart was filled with sympathy for this unfortunate little man, about to be separated from "Maw." He racked his mind for some word of comfort, some little act of kindness, that would soften the blow for a pawn that had come into his temporary keeping as part of the day's work of a policeman.

An idea came to him.

"Tell you what," he spoke with forced cheer. "The barracks are only a mile or two out of our way. What do you say we stop there for a nice hot supper?"

The little man considered the offer.

"I'd like that right well," he decided. "Swell," said Crosby. He had formed a resolution. This would be a temporary respite from what was to follow. For a brief hour this little man would be treated as an honored guest. There would be that happy picture, if his disordered mind could retain it, to carry into a world behind stone walls and steel bars, in which things happen that are foreign to the normal world. Perhaps, if the little man remembered it, he might think more kindly of the men in gray, who had brought him to the new and strange world. Crosby hoped so, from the bottom of his heart.

"We put out good meals at the barracks," he said. "And the fellows will be glad to have you."

The little man nodded happily. Here he was the center of attention. He was not adverse to a little notice.

WHEN the car pulled up before the barracks, Crosby issued instructions to Trooper Myers:

"Take Mr. Clater in, and let him wash up, if he wants to. I'll meet you in the living-room."

He discharged his two passengers, ran the car into the garage, and made his way toward the lieutenants' office. There he found Tiny David, the sole occupant.

"Hello, James."

"Hello, Tiny."

"What brings you in here?"

"A nut. On the way to the factory with him." Crosby's face softened. "Stopped off to throw a good feed into him. Make a fuss over him, will you, Tiny? He gets you. Funny little old fellow. Knows his think-tank has gone sour on him, but is game about it. All that seems to worry him is that he will have to leave his wife. He calls her Maw."

Tiny David nodded.

"Belton, the D. A., wished the commitment-paper on you, didn't he?"

"That's right," Crosby admitted. "Said he called here, and you told him to get in touch with me." He lighted a cigarette. "Funny thing about this nut. He talks all right, and he acts all right."

"Let me see the commitment-paper," Tiny David ordered. "Anything Belton is mixed up in rates a good looking-over. He has no use for us. Hank Linton and I worked a murder case for him. Nothing but circumstantial evidence. He wanted us to change our testimony a bit

to bolster up his case. We couldn't see it that way."

Crosby tossed the document to the desk. Tiny David examined it.

"You say this nut acts all right?" he asked.

"I wouldn't call him any boy prodigy," Crosby asserted. "His age explains that." The Sergeant blew a perfect smoke-ring. "He doesn't seem any crazier than I am."

"Not half as crazy," admitted Tiny David, tossing the printed form aside. "That commitment calls for Alacia Clater, his wife!"

"What?" demanded Crosby. "What—"

"Take a couple more 'what's,'" Tiny David retorted. "They won't help you any."

"But I don't see—" began Crosby.

"I do," came the ominous interruption. "This was small business for a man of your ability. Belton handed you the paper. It probably was folded. Instead of reading every word of it, as your common sense should have told you to, you took a quick look at the first name written in ink. It so happens that was the name of a person who wanted another person committed as an insane person. First-class mess, dimwit, if you ask me!"

Mr. Crosby was thinking fast.

"Everybody makes mistakes," was his somewhat lame offering. He attempted a smile, which stopped short a considerable distance the other side of success. "Best thing for me to do is to return the commiter and pick up the committee. And the quicker the better."

THAT," declared Tiny David, "helps maintain your average for brilliant thinking. Dark Lake is a big place." The sarcasm was so heavy it was oppressive. "Naturally, Belton doesn't know that when he gave you a commitment-paper for Alacia Clater you calmly picked up her husband. When you bring the old man back and take the woman, Belton will know that you just wanted to give the old boy an airing of about one hundred and eighty miles for his health. He wouldn't dream of tipping off a newspaper reporter or two to your smartness. And if they print the story, it will help you, me, the Skipper and the outfit. I'll bet Major Harner will be so pleased that he'll insist on doing something for you. But he'll have to work fast if he wants to get at you ahead of the Skipper."

MR. CROSBY removed his hat. He scratched his head.

"Be careful!" warned Tiny David. "You'll get splinters in your fingers. And don't try to think. Just listen!"

A heavy finger emphasized the orders.

"Leave Clater here. I'll entertain him. You and Myers get back to Dark Lake and pick up the old woman. The fact that we are still holding the old man may cause Belton to think we have something up our sleeves. Then, again, it may not. We have two chances. I should spell all this out for you, but perhaps you can understand it."

"I get it," said Crosby meekly. "All I have is a bluff and a prayer. Mighty decent of you to cut yourself in on this grief of mine, Tiny."

"Get started. The Old Man is in Canton, giving a fish-and-game club several thousand assorted words. If we can get this fixed up before he gets back, you may stay off the relief rolls for a month or two; but I doubt it."

Sergeant Crosby departed, with gloom in his heart.

Tiny David slipped easily into the rôle of host. He and Clater soon were on a basis of friendship. The little old man enjoyed the evening meal. He blinked at the unaccustomed surroundings when, upon leaving the dining-room, he was led to the lieutenants' office.

"Take a chair," Tiny David directed. "Try this cigar."

"Don't care if I do. Aint smoked many of them in my life." He inspected the band carefully. "Good one, aint it?"

The smoke-clouds were curling toward the ceiling when Tiny David asked casually:

"Has there been any insanity in your wife's family?"

Clater put the cigar aside.

"Nope," he answered. "There was three girls. Millie died last year of the pneumonia. Hattie has been dead going on three years, and she died of heart trouble. Only Allie left."

He picked up the cigar.

"Her folks aint living, but they was bright enough." He chuckled quietly. "Lots of folks down our way will tell you old man Hepton was a sight too smart to suit them."

Tiny David was leaning forward eagerly.

"What was Mr. Hepton's first name?" he asked.

"Cyrus K. Hepton. You probably heard tell—"

Clater abruptly ceased speaking. He was alone in the room.

In the outer office, Tiny David shouted a command to the night sergeant:

"Get Sergeant Linton on the telephone. Tell him to shoot over to Dark Lake right away. Sergeant Crosby will be there before long. Tell Linton to find him without fail, and to have him call me just as soon as he gets the message."

He waited until he heard the night sergeant murmur, "Yes sir." Then he



"Thank you, young fellow," said Clater. "I knowed things would come out right, soon as I started talking to you. I'm right grateful."

started back toward the office in which Clater was waiting. The light of joyful anticipation was sparkling in his eyes....

The return trip to Dark Lake found Trooper Myers frankly curious and Sergeant Crosby strangely noncommittal.

"How come we aren't going on to the nut factory?"

"Humph."

Trooper Myers was not discouraged.

"I know why we left the old boy at the barracks," he countered. "They got a look at him, and they figured he would fit into that lieutenant's job better than any of you so-called sergeants."

Crosby regarded his companion with determination mirrored in his eyes.

"This night air is full of germs," he stated. "You keep that big mouth of yours open, and you are bound to pick up some of them. And when the doctors get them under a microscope, they are liable to find that they are just a handful of my fingers."

Mr. Myers lapsed into an injured silence. Something warned him that this would not be a good time to make a facetious remark concerning the famous Crosby technique.

They reached Dark Lake, and persuaded Mrs. Clater to accompany them by telling her that her husband was waiting for her at their destination. They were homeward bound, and at the far end of the village, when they halted in response to a frenzied shout.

Sergeant Linton stepped from his own car, and ran toward them.

"Call Tiny right away!" he shouted. "Barracks sounded as if there were big doings. Get your hand stuck in the cookie-jar, James?"

Crosby nodded gloomily. Motioning Linton to one side, he informed him what had happened. Mr. Linton shook his head in a doleful manner.

"The service at the house," he said, "will be strictly private. Please omit flowers. Well, you might as well get it over with. They have a telephone in that house across the way. They also have a blonde daughter. But remember, a telephone was what you were sent after. As for me—" Sergeant Linton lighted a cigarette with a flourish. "My work for the day ended when I put the finger on you."

SERGEANT CROSBY returned in a very few minutes. He appeared to derive a certain morose satisfaction as he announced:

"Maybe the union won't like it, but you are to do a little overtime, Mr. Crape-hanger. You are to go with me while we pick up Belton and Dr. Hookby, and bring them into the barracks. The old lady goes too, as per previous instructions. We are to keep them apart, so you and what you jokingly call your helper can load the D. A. and the good doctor. And the barracks says there are to be no *if's*, *and's* or *but's* about loading them."

"What's it all about?" demanded Linton.

"That's easy," Crosby retorted. "The Skipper must be back. He is assembling the entire cast for the grand finale in which *Little Eva* goes to heaven." He made a mock curtsy. "You see before you *Little Eva*."

"Okay," said Mr. Linton. "Let's go round up the bloodhounds."

NEITHER Mr. Belton nor Dr. Hookby had contemplated making a trip to the barracks, and neither regarded the idea with enthusiasm. Crosby was too subdued to apply much pressure. Linton, however, was in top form, and past contacts lent zest to the task in hand.

"It's like this," he explained. "I have orders to drive you both to the barracks. I don't know why. But I am not going to take any chances of getting President Roosevelt sore by adding one sergeant to the number of the unemployed. So in you go!"

They spluttered a bit, but in they went. The ninety-mile drive was enlivened by their comments regarding the State Police in general, and Sergeants Linton and Crosby in particular. Linton bore this in silence until the lights of the barracks gleamed in the distance.

"Why don't you two gentlemen get time on the air?" he asked. "I read in a radio magazine that the sponsors are eager for new talent."

The indignant protests were repeated when Belton and Hookby were ushered into the lieutenants' room.

Tiny David cut them short. He addressed the physician:

"You certified Mrs. Clater as insane?"

"I certainly did. I want to know what—"

"You are a visiting physician at the State Hospital, are you not?"

"I certainly am. I am also health officer of Dark Lake. And right here I want to say—"

"That will do," barked Tiny David. He turned to the district attorney:

"Cyrus Hepton left quite an estate, didn't he?"

"Possibly."

"You should know. You were his lawyer, weren't you?"

Belton was silent.

Tiny David sat slouched upon a desk. He yawned openly. His voice was a slow drawl as he continued:

"All right, Mr. District Attorney. You don't have to talk. I'll ask the questions, and I'll give the answers."

His voice grew stern:

"You knew that Cyrus Hepton left an estate that was worth well over half a million. You knew that the death of the other two daughters made Mrs. Clater the sole heir. You knew that Mr. and Mrs. Clater are old, and both rather peculiar, or eccentric."

There was the ghost of a twinkle in his eyes.

"You knew," he continued, "that one of Mrs. Clater's peculiarities was that she doled out money to her husband rather sparingly."

All evidence of mirth vanished from his face and manner.

"You cultivated Clater. You dwelt upon his lack of money. You pointed out his wife's eccentricities to him, and exaggerated them. You emphasized the fact that it would be a real kindness to her if she were placed somewhere to receive medical treatment. You held out the bait that with her gone, Clater would have the money in his own hands. That would make it easy for you to get your hands on it."

AN expression of contempt crossed his broad face as he went on:

"It was easy enough. You are clever. Clater is an old man, and no match for you mentally. You—"

"It's a lie!" screamed Belton. "I'll have you—"

"Shut up!" roared Tiny David. "The next step was to cut Dr. Hookby in on the deal. His work was simple. Although Mrs. Clater is a long way from crazy, it is common gossip that she is peculiar. His findings were not likely to be questioned."

The physician stepped forward.

"You forget one thing, *Sherlock Holmes*. And it knocks all your crazy theories into a cocked hat. You forget that this woman was committed to the State hospital. Do you mean to insinuate

that all the members of the staff there would be a party to what you describe?"

Tiny David sighed.

"You are just dragging this out," he objected. "I'm tired. Had a lot of chasing around today. I want to get to bed as soon as I can. That's why I telephoned to the head physician at the hospital before you arrived. He said that you ordered a private room for Mrs. Clater; that you told him you would be there tomorrow morning to examine her and prescribe for her; and that you said you were greatly interested in her case and would keep her under your own personal care."

THERE was an interruption. Dr. Hookby, hate gleaming in his eyes, charged toward Tiny David. The rush was halted abruptly as Sergeant Linton seized his wrists and spun him around.

"What's all this?"

The question came from the doorway. They turned to confront Captain Field.

Tiny David sighed as he struggled to his feet. All this, his manner indicated, meant more explanations, and he was very tired.

"Never mind," snapped Captain Field. "I heard enough in the other room. Fine business you two birds are in! It will do my heart good to help put you where you won't be able to do any more of that."

He wheeled, and faced Tiny David, Linton and Crosby.

A flush stained the face of Mr. Crosby. A smile, only half concealed, caused the lips of Mr. Linton to twitch. Tiny David, however, stepped forward wearily, and his face was so innocent that a cherub would have suffered by comparison.

"Happened this way, if it please the Captain. They gave Crosby the commitment to serve. Nine times out of ten it would have gone through with no more trouble than it takes to get lots of work for me to do. But Crosby is a smart cop. He knows Belton. So he picked up Mr. Clater instead of Mrs. Clater, and brought him over here to find out—"

"Hum," was the comment of Captain Field.

"Yes sir," Tiny David continued. "Soon as Mr. Clater told me Cyrus Hepton was his father-in-law, I knew a lot of money was involved. That was when we called on Linton to give us a hand, and brought the whole outfit in. After that, it was easy to write the winning slogan and win the new roadster."

"Very clever," was Captain Field's verdict. "One or two questions occur to me, but I won't ask them—for Crosby's sake."

He turned to Clater.

"How do you feel about it now? Still want your wife sent away?"

Tears glistened in the eyes of the aged man.

"Can't Maw and I go back home?" he begged. "I aint never wanted to go through with this, but they was so strong for it, and I figured they must know best, being educated men and officers of the town. But I'll be right thankful to you, Mister, if you'll let Maw and me go home."

Captain Field smiled.

"Sergeant Linton will take you and Mrs. Clater home in just a few minutes. We have a little business here, but it won't take long."

Clater approached Sergeant Crosby, and said earnestly:

"Thank you, young fellow. I knowed things would come out right soon as I started talking to you. I'm right grateful, and I aint meaning to forget it. I didn't rightly catch your name, Mister?"

A certain gentleman, from whose heart there had been lifted a burden of great weight, flushed a fiery red.

"Serg—Sergeant James Crosby," he stammered.

"Tell him the truth!" barked Captain Field. "He is"—he paused significantly—"Lieutenant James Crosby!"

The voice of the commanding officer of the Black Horse Troop grew in volume until it was a roar:

"Lock those two birds up. Take Mr. and Mrs. Clater in the living-room. Then I want to see Lieutenant David, Lieutenant Crosby and Sergeant Linton in my office—alone."

They were silent as they faced him a few minutes later.

"I want Linton to know that no unfairness is being done," explained Captain Field. "And I want you two monkeys to know that you never will be old enough to put anything over on me. Crosby gets the commission because I think this case has taught him some lessons he needed badly, and that he never will forget. That swell explanation of Tiny's went for hokum with me. Do you understand?"

Three grins appeared upon three faces.

"Yes sir!" came the chorus. "We do!"

Another engaging story by Robert R. Mill will appear in the next, the May, issue.

Urgent

A brief but memorable story by a writer new to these pages.

WHEN Webb returned to the radio-room, Henry Bateman, the quiet passenger who wore dark glasses because of a recent eye operation, was still standing near the doorway that led into the little smoking-room.

"Fix the captain's radio okay?" he inquired, with a glance at the soldering-iron in Webb's hand.

Webb, the lean dark-featured operator of the *Plantain*, nodded. "Not much wrong with it. Just a wire loose. He was in a sweat. His favorite night program is on now, and he hates to miss it."

From the earphones lying on the desk came the loud high-pitched note of the radiotelegraph station WAX at Miami, calling the *Plantain*. Webb put the soldering-iron down beside the Morse key, and donned the earphones. He pressed a button, and as the tubes of his transmitter lighted up, he reached for the key and signaled to WAX to send.

He dropped a radiogram blank into the typewriter and began to type. As the message came, one letter at a time, his heart began to thump violently.

URGENT CAPTAIN STEAMER PLANTAIN VIA
MIAMI RADIO

JAMES BERRINGTON IS PASSENGER ON YOUR
VESSEL UNDER NAME OF HENRY BATEMAN
STOP REQUEST YOU PLACE HIM UNDER
ARREST BUT URGE UTMOST CAUTION STOP
AGENTS FLYING TO HAVANA

BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Then Webb's pounding heart rose into his throat with the awareness that his was not the only pair of eyes fastened on those rows of black type. In his ear there sounded a voice, menacing:

"Don't move—don't yell out."

A hand reached over his shoulder and plucked the paper from the machine.

"Now turn round and act normal."

The other chair creaked as a form sank into it. Slowly Webb swiveled round until he was facing Henry Bateman, alias James "Baldy" Berrington. Berrington's hand was in his coat pocket, the cloth poked in Webb's direction.

It was now clear to his alarmed mind why this passenger with the dark glasses

Radiogram

By PATRICK O'KEEFFE

had hung about the radio-room constantly during his hours of watch; why he usually wore a steamer cap pulled well down, gray hair showing below its edge.

James Berrington, master mind of a desperate gang that during the past few months had robbed a string of banks throughout the East, maiming and killing as they plundered and fled! The notorious James Berrington, who, most of his gang shot dead or captured after a series of bloody encounters, had fled to New York, G-men hot on his trail.

"What are you going to do, Berrington?" inquired Webb uneasily.

The reply was swift: "Rub you out."

Webb turned white. "But what good will that do? The G-men will be in Havana in the morning to meet the ship."

Berrington ignored him. "If anyone comes in here meanwhile, mind you don't try to pull anything fast."

THERE was small chance that anyone would visit the radio-room at that late hour tonight. The *Plantain*, New York to the West Indies, had accommodation for only twelve passengers; and because of the early-morning arrival at Havana, all but Berrington had gone below to turn in. Chris, second steward and bartender, was still in his little pantry off the smoking-room, but he would soon be quitting duty now that there were no customers. The radio-room, indeed, on the after end of the boat deck, away from the bridge, was quite remote from human approach.

"A shot would bring Chris running in here," Webb said in sudden hope.

"I could kill him too," replied Berrington coolly. "To save the trouble, I'm waiting till he goes."

Webb's staring eyes went up to the clock. Ten-forty-five. Chris would be gone by eleven.

His mind began a feverish search for escape. His wits were matched against those that had enabled Berrington to elude the cream of the country's detectives. Webb remembered the club-like soldering-iron behind him on the desk. A swift blow with that! But behind



those dark glasses were the watchful eyes of a hunted creature. Yet to Webb the soldering-iron on the desk had suggested a scheme.

At intervals the silence of the little cabin was broken by the loud high-pitched note of WAX coming from the earphones, which were still on Webb's head. Webb's own transmitter had not yet been switched off. Presently Webb said: "That's the coast station; he keeps calling me to acknowledge his message. I may as well answer him and then shut off this set here; otherwise WAX will be calling all night."

"Give my compliments to the G-men at the same time," chuckled Berrington. "Tell them I'll be delighted to meet them in Havana."

Webb swung round to the desk and seized the Morse key. As he tapped out code to WAX, his eyes were fastened on the soldering-iron. He wanted to snatch it up then and whirl about; but he was conscious that Berrington was watching like a cat. He must have patience.

AFTER sending for several seconds, he pressed the stop-button, and the tube transmitter went dark again.

"Did you tell them to send you a wreath?" Berrington asked grimly.

Webb appealed again. "This is a tough break for me, Berrington. I've got a wife and two little girls. I can't see what you'll gain by shooting me. The

G-men will be aboard this ship as soon as she puts her nose inside the harbor."

"Yeah!" sneered Berrington. "I allowed for all that before I left. There's a fast motor-launch waiting for this ship in the dark a few miles off Havana. She's going to signal her to stop and ask some fool question. Before she asks it she's going to come round the stern when the ship is stopped. And I'm going to slide down a rope into her. That's why I've got to rub you out."

In the tense silence that followed, Webb became acutely aware of all the familiar sounds—the swish of the vessel through the smooth sea, the rattle of a bucket somewhere down on the after deck, the beat of the engines, like some gigantic clock ticking off his last seconds.

Then came the clink of bottles and glasses as Chris tidied up his pantry for the night; and presently the rattle of keys as he locked the door; finally his footsteps across the smoking-room floor to the outer entrance, dying away along the deck.

The cruel leer of the killer was now on Berrington's face. "Close the ports. I'll close the door, so the shot won't be heard." And he drew the pistol from his pocket.

Webb rose slowly, pale and staring, like a man already in the execution chamber but still expecting a last-minute reprieve. He reached up in slow motion to lower a port, trying to gain time, for hope was dying hard. His eyes fell to the soldering-iron. There was yet a chance. Then suddenly he heard Berrington's breath go out in a startled hiss. He spun round.

The captain and the mate had stepped silently in from the deck, grim-faced, revolvers drawn. Snarling, Berrington fired point-blank.

The two revolvers roared and flashed red flame together like a salvo. Berrington clutched his throat and fell coughing to the deck. Captain and mate stared down at the motionless form. The wig had fallen from the bald head.

"You just made it!" gasped Webb.

The captain gave him a bewildered look. "The announcer broke in on the music about three minutes ago, all excited. How did it all come about?"

Webb explained. As he was concluding, he picked up the soldering-iron.

"This made me think of your radio," he said. "So I gave WAX a message to telephone without delay to the station broadcasting your favorite program."

The Mines

War-time Abyssinia is the scene of this terrific adventure of the intrepid Intelligence officer known as the Red Wolf of Arabia.

"AND so it is settled, Al Ared, eh?"

The half-caste, Josef Abuna, yawned as he spoke. His dark, oblique eyes glanced round the room of the hotel in Addis Ababa, where the dawn was beginning to reveal the slats in the shutters.

"It is settled," nodded that enigmatic adventurer Paul Rodgers, known to the natives as the Red Wolf of Arabia. With a gesture of his long thin hands, he pushed aside the rough maps and notes that almost smothered the table. "I now know the location of those fabulous mines which have been sought for centuries, the mines where the Queen of Sheba obtained the treasures that she carried as a gift to Solomon, and which also gilded her own court."

"And which today," nodded Josef Abuna, "are possessed by Sari Mansur, the beautiful Abyssinian who claims descent from that same Queen of Sheba. Do not forget, Al Ared," went on the half-caste, a strange gleam in his dark eyes, "that the beautiful Sari Mansur is ambitious. And with the treasures of Sheba at her command, she can buy souls as well as men."

A suspicion of a smile crossed the thin ascetic face of Red Rodgers.

"And do not forget, my friend," he replied in turn, "that the beautiful Queen of Sheba was club-footed. She could not walk like a queen. It was the one defect in her majesty."

"What am I to understand from that?" asked Josef Abuna, accepting with a polite smile the cigarettes that were thrust toward him.

"Only that wise men, like generals, seek the defect, the weakness in the enemy. The beautiful Sari Mansur, ambitious and clever though she may be, has her defect, her weakness, also."

"And what may it be?"

With lazy indifference the half-caste blew a spiral of smoke in the air.

Paul Rodgers lowered his eyelids.

of Sheba's Queen

By WILLIAM J. MAKIN

Illustrated by John Clymer



As the little group shuffled out of the room, the Emperor nodded slightly, significantly, to the hangman from Cairo.

"That I must discover and keep to myself—until the final battle between us is fought," he replied evasively.

The half-caste nodded.

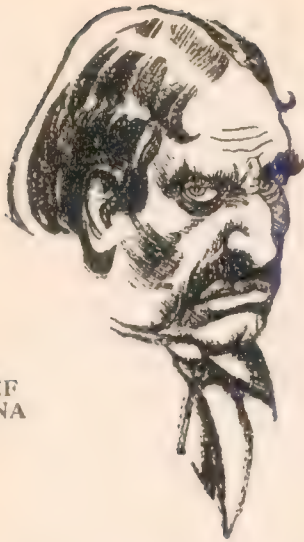
"I understand, Al Ared. So far you have been successful, very successful in your encounters with this strange but elusive woman. The Emperor, Haile Selassie, is more than grateful that you saved him from assassination. But there is something in my blood, my mixed blood, if you will, that tells me there is a time when luck deserts a man. Success does not always follow success. This adventure may end in a different fashion."

And he flicked the ash from his cigarette.

"I appreciate your fatalistic instinct, my friend," nodded Red Rodgers. "*Insh'allah*, as the holy Koran says. But shall I tell you why I believe this final adventure with Sari Mansur will be successful?"

"I am all ears."

"Because I consider myself so far to have failed dismally," went on the Intelligence officer. "I have always been



JOSEF
ABUNA

something of a gambler. The stakes I play for are high—human lives. And so far, I would point out, the life of that beautiful creature Sari Mansur has escaped me. As a gambler, I know the luck will turn. It must turn."

He spoke quietly but confidently.

"Why do you so hate this woman?" ventured the half-caste. "Have I not heard, throughout the Red Sea regions, that the famous Al Ared is not interested in women?"

Red Rodgers squared his jaw.

"A man may forgive a woman any infamy to himself—but not to his friends," he said, slowly. "And what Sari Mansur has done to my friends can only be paid for by death."

"So I am safe in thinking that even the treasures of Sheba's mines will not tempt you from your purpose?" said Abuna, a strange smile on his lips.

"Not even the treasures of Sheba," replied Rodgers, darting a shrewd glance at the lithe figure before him.

"Then I must say good-by," said Josef Abuna, holding out his hand. "The Emperor commands me to say that the Junker airplane, his personal plane, and the pilot, will be ready at noon to take you to Harrar. Further than that, will depend upon your own resources. Already the Italians are advancing toward the Ogaden. And where you are going lies between the two armies."

Rodgers smiled as he shook the hand of the Emperor's confidential adviser.

"My own little battlefield should prove exciting," he murmured. "And now, my friend, I suggest that you go home and sleep."

Josef Abuna shook his head.

"It is not possible," he yawned. "At ten o'clock this morning the Emperor is to open a new jail in Addis Ababa. All the diplomats and foreign representatives will be present. The Emperor desires to show the world that even in dealing with criminals Ethiopia can claim to be civilized. The new jail even possesses a little room for executions, complete with the latest machinery, and a hangman engaged specially in Cairo."

"Is that considered Western civilization?" inquired the Intelligence officer. "Personally, I should have thought a firing squad and a blank wall much more to the point for a poor devil condemned to death."

"With a war raging," chuckled Josef Abuna, "ammunition is too precious to waste in that fashion. Hence the little room for hangings. Good-by, Al Ared."

And still chuckling at his grim joke, the confidential adviser sauntered forth from the hotel into the streets of a sky-whitened Addis Ababa, yawning itself awake. . . .

As this son of an Austrian father and an Abyssinian mother wandered forth, Red Rodgers gave a sigh of relief and helped himself to a cigarette. He regarded the accumulated heap of maps and notes with some satisfaction. Throughout the night hours, with the help of Josef Abuna, he had carefully sifted and weighed every piece of evidence available as to the existence of the Queen of Sheba's mines.

The story of this treasure-cave had come down the ages, since its first mention in the Bible. He flicked the pages of the Bible, and read:

"And the Queen of Sheba gave the king one hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices very great store, and precious stones: there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the Queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon."

Many explorers and prospectors had since searched for those mines. For a long time it was thought that the treasure-caves of Sheba were hidden in that empty quarter of Arabia known as the Rub Al Khali. Once, on an adventure among those dead sands, the Red Wolf himself had stumbled across the stone ruins of a city that was named Saba, and said to be the original capital of the famous Queen. But there was no trace of treasure among the ruins, and Rodgers had decided that the mines were in Africa, among those distant regions

which the Queen of Sheba brought under her rule.

Abyssinia, whose kings claimed descent from that early meeting between Solomon and the Queen, seemed the most likely place—particularly as the Queen of Sheba in the later years of her reign moved her capital from the Arabian desert to the African highlands on the other side of the Red Sea. Rodgers had ransacked the palace library in Addis Ababa for maps and documents bearing upon the legend. He had been helped, eagerly, by the half-caste Josef Abuna. And now the place of many legends was marked on the map before him.

THE door of the room opened quietly. Rodgers swiveled round. Entering in cringing doglike fashion was the blind Armenian whose torture-scarred body Rodgers had purchased for ten thalers in the slave-market a short time prior to this, and who, Rodgers had discovered, owed his scars and blindness to a previous meeting with the woman now calling herself the Queen of Sheba.

"What now, Kharput?" he demanded.

The man turned his sightless eyes to the slatted windows.

"The day has come," he replied simply.

"I await my master's commands."

"So even the coming of the day is known to you," murmured the Intelligence officer.

"A blind man senses more than those who have eyes can see," nodded the Armenian wisely.

Rodgers pushed a cigarette into the twisted, groping fingers of this poor devil who had once worked for the British Intelligence at Aden.

"But at least I can see that you have bought yourself a new silk sash, Kharput," said Rodgers, striking a match and holding it to the cigarette.

The heavy lips of the Armenian puffed greedily. Then his twisted fingers went to the blood-red silk sash twisted about the Arab *kufan* that he wore.

"It is a good silk sash," said the blind man quietly. "Ten men could not tear it apart. I bought it for a purpose."

"May I ask what purpose?"

It almost seemed a menacing gleam shot from those sightless eyes.

"I intend that soft silk to caress the beautiful throat of Sari Mansur, she who calls herself Queen of Sheba," he retorted. "And then, slowly, with my own hands, I shall draw it tight—tight!" The twisted fingers groped in the air. "I have

told you, M'sieur Rodger', that before my eyes were burnt out, they gazed upon that woman's face. She was smiling then. Although I shall not be able to see her face, I shall smile at the knowledge of the agony in her features when I strangle the life out of her."

A smile came to that face which previously had been one of dull hopelessness. At the same time he blew forth a cloud of smoke with sybaritic enjoyment.

The Red Wolf regarded him steadily.

"I was of the opinion, Kharput," he said quietly, "that you were afraid to venture further in the affair of the Queen of Sheba."

The blind man shook his head.

"After what happened last night, M'sieur Rodger', when you saved the life of the Emperor of Abyssinia, I am no longer afraid to play my part once more. Truly, the tales I heard of the Red Wolf of Arabia were not told in a boastful spirit. I am with you, Paul Rodger', to the end of the adventure."

And with a gesture he held out that tortured, twisted hand. Rodgers took it in his firm, cool grasp.

"I fly at noon to the deserts of the Ogaden," he said.

"I am with you, m'sieur."

"I intend to seek out the treasure-caves of the Queen of Sheba."

"I can help you, m'sieur, for I was blinded and tortured there—and though today I have no eyes, yet if I am with you in twenty miles of the mines of Sheba, I could lead you to them."

A blind man as a guide! Yet Paul Rodgers saw nothing ironic in it. He said, simply:

"You are a brave man, Kharput."

The blind man shook his head.

"I merely seek just vengeance," was all he said. Then, as an afterthought: "I will be ready at noon, m'sieur."

"Thank you, Kharput."

And Rodgers noticed that the Armenian drew his torture-wrenched body together and squared his shoulders as he walked out of the room.

AT precisely ten o'clock, the Emperor of Ethiopia,—King of Kings and Lion of Judah,—paced slowly the cement and brick corridors of the new prison at Addis Ababa. Preceding him was the red ceremonial parasol. Behind him came a group of foreign diplomats, a few newspaper correspondents, a sprinkling of guards, and the inevitable Josef Abuna, confidential adviser to the Emperor.

The diplomats covered their boredom with polite interest. The newspaper men were obviously more concerned with the possibilities of going to the fighting front than perambulating the corridors of a newly erected prison. But the Emperor himself was obviously proud of this addition of Western civilization to his semi-barbaric empire. He insisted on the group visiting the cells, the mess-halls and even the parade-ground.

Finally they reached the execution-chamber. The diplomats were startled as they entered the little octagonal room. For not only was there a new hempen rope dangling from a hook in the ceiling, and the smell of grease suggesting that the trapdoor beneath was ready for action; but three powerful men stood there with folded arms, as though awaiting the first victim. One swarthy individual with pockmarked face was obviously the new hangman engaged in Cairo.

The British Minister, who had been one of the first to enter that little room, stepped back cautiously from the cuts in the floor that marked the trapdoor.

"It would almost appear, sire," he said to the Emperor, "that an execution was imminent."

The Emperor stroked his beard and smiled sadly.

"I am afraid, Sir Godfrey, that there will be an execution very soon," he said.

His liquid, expressive eyes took in the whole scene. The little group behind him craned their heads and stared at the three men with folded arms. Then, as the procession shuffled out of the room, the Emperor nodded slightly, significantly, to the hangman from Cairo.

RESPECTFULLY the half-caste Josef Abuna stood aside to allow the distinguished visitors to file out. He brought up the rear. But just as he was about to step through the doorway, a hand fell upon his shoulder. Startled, he swung round.

"What is it?" he asked testily.

He faced the hangman. The other two men stretched forth their hands and grasped him tightly. A kick from one of the men, and the door clicked to, after the departing visitors. Something in the grim expression of the hangman with his folded arms caused a wave of terror to overwhelm Josef Abuna.

"What does this mean?" he shrilled. "How dare you! The Emperor shall be told of this."

At last the hangman spoke.

"What we do is by order of the Emperor," he said gruffly. "Bind him!"

Josef Abuna started to scream. But a black hand swiftly covered his mouth. At the same time his hands were twisted behind his back and knotted with cord. With the same swiftness, cords were looped about his feet and drawn tight. Shaking his head desperately, the bound man was dragged to the center of the trapdoor.

With a cool and practiced hand, the Cairo hangman reached upward and brought a gray linen cap over the head and face of the doomed man. The noose of the new hempen rope followed. Quickly it was adjusted about the neck of Josef Abuna.

A NOD from the hangman, and the two assistants stepped back. The trussed man in the gray cap was swaying in the center of the little room. The man from Cairo clutched a lever. There was a sudden crash of opening trapdoors; the trussed figure shot downward; the rope ran through the hook and then jerked. A little whine came from the straining hemp. Calmly the hangman stared downward, with professional interest, at the dangling body. . . .

The crash of those opening trapdoors and the thud of the falling body had been heard by the group of distinguished visitors still perambulating the corridors. The British Minister gazed questioningly at the Emperor.

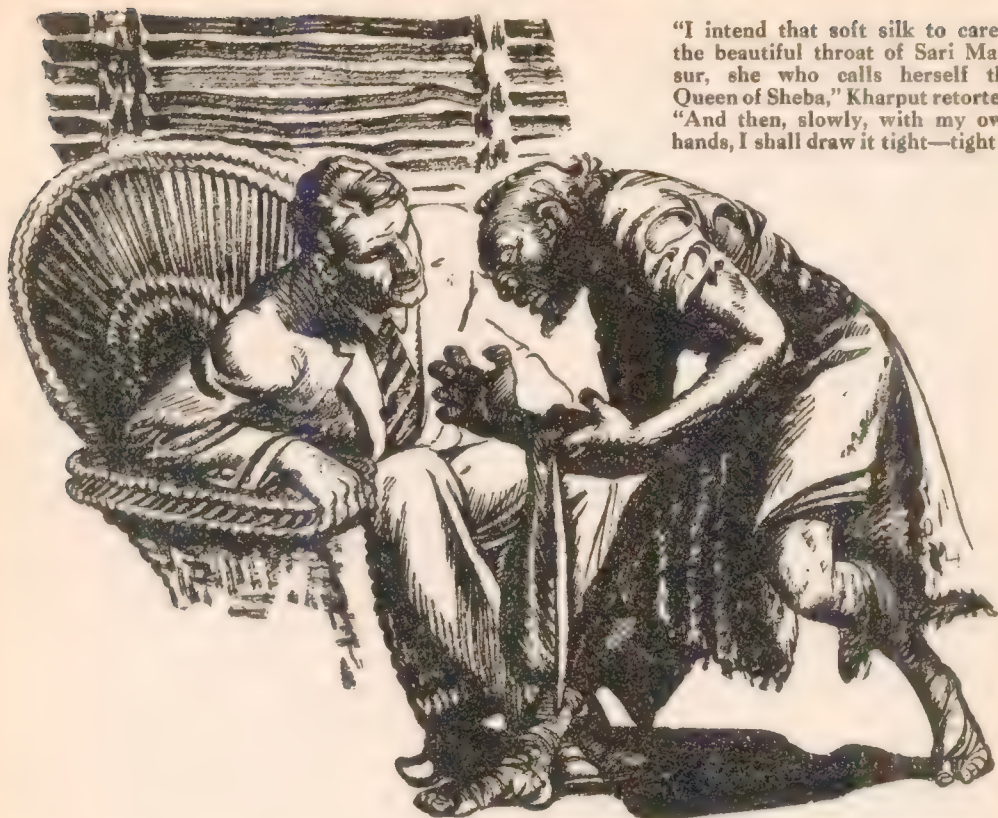
"A little too much zeal, *hein?*" nodded the Emperor, speaking in French. "The hangman and his assistants are indulging in a rehearsal. I imagined you would prefer not to see it."

"Thank you, sire," said Sir Godfrey, mopping his brow.

Once again the Emperor smiled and led the little relieved group toward the exit. None of them noticed that their number had been reduced by one. . . .

At ten minutes to twelve Paul Rodgers, the blind Armenian and the Arab boy Abdul were stowing themselves and several packages into the straining, roaring Junker airplane that waited on the race-course of Addis Ababa near the palace. The German pilot was methodically testing each of the three engines.

Just as Rodgers was about to close the door of the cabin, a motorcar came bumping over the race-course. It stopped within a few yards, and a khaki-clad officer of the Imperial Guard stepped out and handed an envelope to Rodgers.



"I intend that soft silk to caress the beautiful throat of Sari Mansur, she who calls herself the Queen of Sheba," Kharput retorted. "And then, slowly, with my own hands, I shall draw it tight—tight!"

"By order of the Emperor!" he announced in French, and clicked his heels in salute.

Rodgers tore the envelope open. Inside was a badly typewritten letter, signed by the Emperor himself. It read:

Dear Monsieur Rodgers:

After the attempt last night on my life had been foiled by your clever intervention, certain information was placed in my hands which proved that my confidential adviser, Josef Abuna, had succumbed to the rich temptations offered by the woman who dares to call herself Queen of Sheba. I spent the night perusing the evidences of his guilt—which, alas, dated only from the arrival of Sari Mansur in Addis Ababa. Certain sums of money were paid by our enemies to Josef Abuna on the understanding that you, as well as myself, should be delivered into her hands. There is no doubt that any information given to you by Josef Abuna as to the location of the treasure-caves of Sheba was with the deliberate intention of delivering you into the hands of this accursed woman. I therefore beg of you not to imperil your life further, but to abandon this adventure for the present.

As for Josef Abuna, he paid the penalty of his treachery two hours ago.

The missive was sealed and signed in the ornate fashion of the royal house of Ethiopia.

Two hours ago! Red Rodgers gave a little shiver. Then his jaw set. He turned to the waiting officer.

"My deep respects to His Majesty," he said. "I thank him for his warning. Nevertheless I am going to seek out the mines of Sheba."

And with a nod to the pilot, he slammed the door of the cabin. A moment later, with the three engines roaring, the airplane raced across the field and lifted over the corrugated iron roofs and mud walls of Addis Ababa. The Emperor, in his palace, heard the roar of the machine climbing—and he sighed.

"There goes another brave man to his death," he murmured. . . .

Dum—dum. . . . Oom—doom!

As the sound thrummed through the sunlit air of high noon in the desert of Ogaden, a smile crossed the grimed, ascetic face of Paul Rodgers. He urged his lean racing camel toward the scraggy beast on which was mounted the blind Armenian.

"You seem worried, Kharput," he said.

"Yes, I am worried," nodded the blind man. "For the past six days since we left Harrar, I have heard those drums

sounding through the bush and desert. I do not pretend to know the language of the drums, but I suspect that they tell that woman of our progress."

"You are right, Kharput," nodded Red Rodgers. "They do tell Sari Mansur that we are approaching the treasure-caves of Sheba. She is waiting for us."

"But m'sieur, is this not folly? What can you alone, or even with the help of a blind man and an Arab boy, do against a woman with a horde of fanatics and a wealth of treasure at her command?"

"We can do everything," said Red Rodgers quietly. "But there is still time, should you wish, Kharput, for you to turn back and ride to Harrar."

The blind Armenian shook himself angrily.

"I have given my word to go through with you to the end of this adventure," he said. "Tell me now what the country ahead looks like. I feel that we are nearing the end of our journey."

The Red Wolf wrinkled his eyes.

"There is but two miles of desert," he said, "and then a range of hills rise out of the sand. They look like huge lumps of rusty iron."

"Yes—yes! Go on!" urged the blind Kharput. "Describe the shape of the hills."

"The biggest one," resumed Red Rodgers, "is shaped like a huge cow, a red cow couched in the sunshine."

"I know," nodded the blind man. "But what makes you think of it as a cow?"

"Because, at the side of it, is a taller yet smaller hill, which looks for all the world like a calf standing at the side of its mother," he murmured, staring at the horizon.

"That's it," said the other excitedly. "A calf. A golden calf, eh?"

"It might be," said Rodgers.

"It must be," said Kharput. "I tell you, m'sieur, we have arrived. Deep in the ravines of that hill of the golden calf, we shall discover the treasure-caves of Sheba. I know it, for I have been there."

"AT our present rate of progress," considered Rodgers, "we should be there before nightfall."

"And Sari Mansur will be there to receive us," said the blind man somberly.

Rodgers chuckled.

"I have other plans, my friend." He touched the flanks of his camel with his heels. The beast responded; and piston-like, the scraggy legs leaped forward. Rodgers rode on for about half a mile,

then pulled the beast round. He stood there, the red hills as a background.

As his little cavalcade came plodding after him through the sand, he held up his hand.

"We halt here until tomorrow!" he said. "There is a water-hole here."

And he pointed to some muddy moisture close to his camel.

THE leader of five Galla men of his escort, who were also mounted on camels carrying boxes of supplies, began to remonstrate.

"I would urge upon you, Al Ared," he said, "to ride on out of the desert into the mountains. There is water, fresh water, in plenty there. And before sunset we could reach our journey's end."

"Nevertheless," said Rodgers, dismounting decisively from his camel and leading it to the water-hole, "I intend to stay the night here. Those are my orders."

The leader of the Galla men grumbled, but shrugged his shoulders. He gave a curt order to the caravan, and all dismounted. The camels slobbered and whined in their eagerness to drink the muddy water.

"The Galla men are right, m'sieur," said the blind Armenian. "They are all anxious to have the desert behind them. If you do not push on to the mountains, they may abandon us during the night."

Rodgers shook his head and grinned. Then he said grimly:

"There is no fear of that, Kharput."

"May I ask why, m'sieur?"

"Because they have orders from Sari Mansur to see that we are safely delivered into her hands. They dare not leave us."

The blind man sighed.

"I think the desert sun has touched you with madness, Paul Rodgers."

The Intelligence officer laughed.

"Not so, my friend. Consider what has happened to us since the Emperor's plane deposited us in Harrar."

"But nothing has happened," protested the Armenian. "Everything has gone smoothly."

"Exactly," said Rodgers. "Nothing has happened—when everything should have happened. Everything has gone smoothly, far too smoothly for my liking." His voice dropped to a whisper: "Do you realize that when we asked for guides and porters to take us across this desert, there was no lack of volunteers? I took the first men who offered them-



Rodgers had anticipated the attack; but when he was leaped upon from behind and dragged to the ground, he made no further effort.

selves, and their price was paltry. I knew that they were in the pay of Sari Mansur.

"If we had crossed this desert with any but Sari Mansur's men," he went on, "we should have been attacked, hindered and maybe killed by the desert raiders. Instead, the raiders ride away at our approach. Such encampments as we came across gave help in food and water—with the result that in six days we are at the entrance to Sheba's kingdom. No, my friend, it is all too easy."

"It seems all too difficult to me, m'sieur," murmured the blind man. "You are offering yourself like a sheep to the slaughter."

"There will be slaughter," said Rodgers sternly. "But maybe it will be the sheep that runs amok. In the meantime, see that your camel is well watered and rested. Then whisper the word to Abdul, and come to my tent before sunset."

"As you command, m'sieur."

And as though scenting the water-hole, the blind man walked without hesitation in that direction.

WITHIN half an hour the camp was pitched. The Gallas grumbled but seemed resigned. In his tent, squatting Arab-fashion on a strip of ragged carpet, Paul Rodgers unfolded his maps and pored over them. After careful calculations he judged that they were within twenty miles of the boundary line of British Somaliland. Nearly a hundred miles south was Italian Somaliland, out of which the military patrols and light tanks of General Graziani, the Italian commander, were already emerging. He guessed that the present plan of Sari Mansur was to remain in the fastness of her mountain stronghold until the Italian forces joined up with her. Then she would sweep with them through the Ogaden, play her part with a crafty di-

plomacy, and be proclaimed Empress of Ethiopia.

And what of the treasure-caves of Sheba? That enormous wealth at her disposal would remain a secret even to the Italians. With that wealth at her command, she could achieve any ambition. And yet it was that treasure-cave which Red Rodgers, single-handed, intended to destroy. With a smile he put away his maps, and dragged toward him two heavy wooden boxes.

On several occasions during the trek through the desert, the Galla porters had complained of the weight of those two wooden boxes. And no wonder! As Rodgers opened one of them, a series of what looked like big leaden cigars were revealed, ranged in a wooden rack such as usually is employed to hold test-tubes. Each leaden "cigar" was notched with figures, and had a screw cap at one end. Rodgers placed the rack on the strip of ragged carpet.

Then he opened the other wooden case. Couched in layers of cotton-wool were two squat bottles. These bottles contained an oily-looking transparent liquid of a pale yellow color.

Deftly his slim hands got to work. First of all he glanced at his watch. He

made a rapid calculation in time. Then he uncorked one of the bottles and began slowly to pour the liquid into one of the leaden cigars until it reached a certain notch. Outside his tent the Galla men, busy tethering the camels, did not realize that only a few yards away a man was toying with sufficient explosive to blow them all sky-high.

RODGERS had obtained these deadly time-bombs from a Greek engineer in Addis Ababa. They were of a type known to most secret-service agents and men engaged in the dangerous business of sabotage. They had been used extensively in the Great War. The principle was a simple one. Each of the leaden cigars held a high explosive. A copper disk covered the explosive and left a small container for the acid. Slowly but surely, the acid would eat through the copper, and in time ignite the explosive. The timing of the explosive depended upon the amount of acid used. These cigars had the advantage of being easily concealed in an out-of-the-way corner, and not being readily discernible.

For nearly an hour Red Rodgers worked over this test-tube rack of annihilation. The slightest tremor of his hand, and the acid would spill. And as he filled each cigar, the timing had to be altered. At last, with a sigh of relief, the job was completed. Carefully he replaced the rack in one of the cases. Already the acid would be at work, eating its way through the thin copper disk, and would in time meet the explosive. Rodgers cleared away all traces of his handiwork, then stood up and calmly lit a cigarette. No sooner had he done so than the flap of his tent opened to admit Kharput, the blind Armenian, followed by the perky brown face of the Arab boy Abdul.

"The Galla men?" asked Rodgers.

"Squatting in a circle, sulking," said the blind man.

"They have been talking about her," whispered the boy Abdul, in Arabic.

"I expected they would," said Red Rodgers. "Sit down, my friends, and listen carefully to my commands."

The Arab boy squatted on the ground in the fashion of his kind. The blind man stretched out a hand, found a wooden case and sank onto it. Rodgers regarded him thoughtfully.

"Tonight, Kharput," he said quietly, "while the camp is sleeping, you and I will ride on our camels to that distant

hill which you call the Golden Calf. There will be no moon; and because the route will be dark and treacherous, I shall have to depend upon the sight that is in your brain."

"Every detail of the route is clear in my mind," said the blind man confidently.

"Good," replied Rodgers. "A mistake would be fatal to our plans."

"But why do we go tonight, and alone?" asked Kharput.

"Because she who calls herself Queen of Sheba does not expect us until tomorrow. I wish to see the caves of treasure and the Hall of Judgment without being conducted through them by Sari Mansur."

"I think I understand, m'sieur. Then you do not intend to keep that rendezvous tomorrow?"

"On the contrary," smiled Red Rodgers. "I shall most certainly be there at the very hour I am expected. I do not intend to miss that meeting for anything."

"She will have you flayed alive," muttered the blind man.

"Maybe," replied Rodgers casually. "But if all goes well tonight, our revenge will be certain. No doubt, my poor Kharput, you have read in the Bible the story of Samson and Delilah?"

"When I had eyes to see—yes."

"And Samson, you will recall, brought the temple walls crashing down upon the Philistines."

"I am no Samson," muttered the Armenian despondently.

"No, but we have cunning brains," said Rodgers quietly. "And with those brains we shall destroy this false Queen of Sheba and her hosts."

"And what of me, master?" asked the patient Abdul in Arabic. He had been squatting near the Red Wolf, listening to the talk in a strange tongue.

IMMEDIATELY Rodgers lapsed into Arabic.

"Abdul, my boy, much depends upon you tonight. First of all I remember that it has been your custom to prepare coffee for the camp at sunset."

"In this barbarous country I am the only one who can make good coffee," said Abdul proudly. "And lest these savages should poison you, I have taken care that all the coffee shall be prepared by myself."

"Therefore, this evening," nodded Rodgers, "you will prepare the coffee as

usual. And to make the flavor even more delectable, as is told in the Koran of the sheiks who lounge in Paradise, you will empty this small bottle of opiate into the coffee-pot."

"But that, master, will cause us all to sleep heavily," protested the boy.

"All who drink the coffee," corrected Rodgers. "As usual, you will hand the first cups to Kharput and myself. We shall only pretend to drink. Then serve the coffee to the Galla men. The cold winds will be coming across the desert, and they will drink greedily. As for yourself, Abdul—no coffee tonight."

"It is not yet the fast," grumbled the boy.

"Nevertheless, no coffee," insisted Rodgers. "For tonight there is work for you to do. We part, here."

"No, no, master!" said the boy, suddenly understanding and flinging himself at the feet of Paul Rodgers. "I go with you until death. I stayed with my master Tomlinson Sahib until he was murdered by those dogs in the darkness of Aden. Now you, Rodger' Sahib, are my master. I will never leave you."

THE Intelligence officer gazed down at the boy groveling at his feet. Something like a glow of pride came to that thin, sunburnt face, and the steely blue eyes had a misty gleam in them. He touched the boy gently with his hand.

"You can only save me from death, Abdul, by obeying my commands," he said softly.

The boy choked down a sob in his throat. "I want to stay, master," he said sullenly.

"And I say you must obey my commands," said Rodgers sternly. "By the Holy Koran, I will have you lashed a thousand and one times if you do not obey."

"I am your slave, Rodger' sahib," sobbed the boy.

"Then wipe away your tears and observe this picture in the sand," commanded the Intelligence officer. His long lean fingers began to trace a map. "Here is our camp in the desert," he said, stumping a little hole. "And here, to the westward, where the sun sets, is an outpost where a British officer is camped with several Somalis."

"Dogs of the desert," muttered Abdul. "How far away, master?"

"Eight hours' hard riding by camel," said Rodgers. "When the camp is asleep, and Kharput and myself have de-

parted for the cave of treasures, you, Abdul, will take a camel and ride for the outpost, which is called Bohotlep. You will seek out the white sahib there, and give him this letter."

Rodgers produced a sealed envelope and watched the boy tuck it away in his soiled *kustan*.

"And then?" asked Abdul, gazing pathetically into the eyes of his master.

"You will obey the orders of the white sahib," said Rodgers briefly.

"And shall I see you again, Rodger' sahib?" implored the boy, tears dimming his liquid eyes.

"Assuredly," replied Paul Rodgers. "It is as Allah wills. *Allah O akbar!*" he concluded.

"Allah is great," replied the boy devoutly. "I shall wait for you, master."

"I thank you, Abdul."

For a moment Rodgers clasped the boy's hand. Abdul was overcome. He bent his perky Arab face and kissed those hands, which he had so often watched as they conjured strange music out of the piano his master loved. Then, with eyes still blinded with tears, he ran out of the tent.

"Go to him, Kharput," said Rodgers quietly, "and comfort him. Then rest, for there is much work to be done tonight."

Left alone in the tent, the man known as the Red Wolf of Arabia sighed and stretched himself on the piece of ragged carpet. In less than three minutes he was fast asleep, a peaceful expression on his finely cut features.

And as the sun began to fall toward the desert horizon, the distant drums began their thudding once again.

Dum—dum. . . . Oom—doom!

They were telling the waiting Sari Mansur that Paul Rodgers, Red Wolf of Arabia, would arrive at the treasure-cave of Sheba before the next sunset.

A FANTASTIC adventure: a blind man with pictures in his brain, leading a man who could not see through the velvet darkness of the night.

Kharput and Paul Rodgers had abandoned their camels, once they reached the end of the gorge which led to the boulder-strewn fastness of the hill called the Golden Calf. Strapped to his sweating back, Rodgers carried that wooden box with its leaden cigars of annihilation. As he scrambled over huge rocks and crawled along a ledge where a precipice fell sheer into the darkness, he wondered



"Look around, and see the treasure-cave of Sheba," said Sari Mansur. "A throne will be placed

how soon it would be before the jolting sent that acid filtering through to the high explosive. Once he stumbled and almost pitched into the black chasm. But the sure hand of the blind Armenian clutched him and dragged him back into safety. Rodgers lay panting for a moment, awaiting the blinding flash and the tearing-asunder of his body. The moment passed.

"From the next shoulder of the hill," whispered Kharput, "a group of huts should be seen. There live the workers of the mines of Sheba."

"God grant they all be asleep!" muttered Rodgers.

"There will be sentries," warned the blind man. "Watch out for them, m'sieur."

"I cannot see my hand before my face," was the Intelligence officer's reply.

They resumed their perilous progress. Soon they were crawling on their hands and knees. So hard was the going that

Rodgers was convinced that their panting exertions must be heard. Despite the cold night air whistling softly through this crack in the hill, he was conscious that all about him were men and women, uneasy sleeping shadows. Once or twice he discerned dozing sentries. A touch on the shoulder of Kharput was sufficient to still their crawling progress.

At long last, the Armenian squatted.

"We should be at the entrance to the cave now, m'sieur," he whispered. "Cannot you see it?"

"I still see only blackness."

"Maybe if you go forward, m'sieur?"

Rodgers decided. Rising to his feet, he slowly advanced, one hand held out before him like a blind man. A dozen steps he took, anticipating at any moment to step on air and hurtle down a precipice. Then suddenly he stopped. A queer soughing noise could be heard. The musical acuteness of his mind could not register it accurately, but he imagined a waterfall deadened by banks of cotton wool.



for you by this one. I give you the choice—life or death.” . . . “I choose death,” said Rodgers.

“We have entered the cave of treasures, m’sieur,” chuckled the voice of the blind man, who had followed in his leader’s footsteps.

Instinctively, Rodgers jerked his gaze upward. For a moment he imagined himself standing in the darkness of a planetarium, for an inverted bowl of stars seemed to glitter over his head.

“Everywhere—queer lights are glittering,” he murmured to the blind man. “It is as though I had been cracked on the head with a bludgeon.”

Kharput chuckled again.

“Diamonds,” he explained. “The whole cave of treasure is hollowed out of diamondiferous soil. There are thousands of rough stones still embedded in the walls.”

“A wealth of treasure,” murmured the astonished Rodgers. “It would buy the ransom of a dozen kings.”

“It is from this cave that the ancient Queen of Sheba brought treasures to dazzle even the court of Solomon,” said the

blind man humbly. “And beyond this cave is a reef of gold through which the miners have penetrated and made several passages. Corridors of gold!”

“Incredible.”

“And rubies too. I have myself gazed upon a blood-red pool of light where rubies unequaled in any other part of the world may be picked up like pebbles. But remember, m’sieur, it was in this cave of treasures—in what she calls the Hall of Judgment—that my eyes were burnt out while that woman sat on her throne and laughed.”

“There is a throne, then?”

“A matter of a hundred paces, m’sieur.”

The queer phosphorescent light of the diamonds walling the cave was now helping Rodgers to discern the vastness of the cavern into which they had entered. But even as he moved toward the spectral majesty of the throne, that unearthly sound of water tumbling over cotton-wool came dully to his ears.

“That noise!” he said. “What is it?”

"A subterranean river, the one I told you of," replied Kharput. "It murmurs and moans constantly behind the throne where the woman sits to gloat upon her victims."

"So!"

Ignoring the throne, Paul Rodgers had gone to the rough-diamond wall behind it. He pressed his ear to the rock and earth. Now he could hear it plainly, a rumble and tumble of angry waters imprisoned in the earth. To him at that moment it seemed possessed of the fateful bass notes in a Beethoven symphony seeking to dominate the sweeter pastoral melodies of a world that dwelt in sunshine.

He looked at his watch.

"Time presses, Kharput. Quick! Hand me a drill."

And he unslung the heavy package with its deadly leaden cigars from his shoulders.

For the next hour the two men worked in a sweat, boring, plugging and smearing away all traces of their handiwork with dirt from the diamond walls.

At last it was finished. They crept cautiously from the cave. Once more they eluded the dozing sentries, and essayed that perilous passage alongside a crevasse. Finally, as the strange, unearthly light of the false dawn was streaking the sky, they regained their camels at the foot of the pass.

Then, tired and dispirited, they rode swiftly back to the sleeping camp in the desert.

THERE was an air of finality in their approach to the village in the blinding sunshine of noon. Paul Rodgers and the blind Armenian were, in fact, prisoners. They marched with their Galla guards, but their arms were trussed to their sides. The attack had taken place at the entrance to the pass into the hill of the Golden Calf. That morning the heavily sleeping camp had awakened to discover that an Arab boy, Abdul, had fled during the night, taking with him one of the best camels. There had been a general cursing, in which Rodgers had joined heartily. The leader of the Galla men had himself decided privately to slit the throat of the perky Arab boy; and being denied this pleasure, he spat his disgust aloud.

However, the caravan had started, and it reached the boulder-strewn cleft leading to the heart of the Golden Calf hill, which Rodgers and the blind man had

traversed during the night. Here there had been a general dismounting, a tethering of camels—and then a sudden attack upon Rodgers and Kharput by the Galla men who had acted as guides.

RODGERS had anticipated the attack. Even before the first man leaped toward him, he had drawn a revolver and shot the Galla man dead. Another tribesman had suffered the same fate. Rodgers fired with cool deliberation and murderous intent. The moment, however, that he was leaped upon from behind and dragged to the ground, he made no further effort. Weapons were taken from him, and he was quickly trussed. Poor Kharput, standing puzzled in the sand, was easily overpowered.

Finally the Galla leader had walked triumphantly up to his two prisoners and struck each of them across the face.

"I would that I had the killing of you myself, Al Ared!" he snarled at Rodgers. "I would teach you that even Galla men know something of the subtleties of torture."

The Intelligence officer, a red weal across his face, stared without fear at his traitor guide.

"There will be much killing and torture before the sun sets," he said calmly.

The Galla leader gave an ugly grin.

"And I shall be there to see it," he nodded. He turned to his followers. "Bring these dogs along!" he commanded. "The Queen of Sheba will know how to deal with them."

Without a second glance at the two dead men in the sand, the caravan had begun the journey toward the cave of treasures. It had progressed slowly and methodically. At last they had rounded the shoulder of the hill and seen the beehive huts of the mine workers, and those who toiled to bring forth the treasures from this rich hole in the earth.

A frenzied shouting crowd with drummers at their head met them. Black fists pounded the stretched hides of the drums. The long, curved trumpets of Abyssinia wailed triumphantly. Pariah dogs sneaked forth, barking and snarling savagely. Children, clutching the draperies of their mothers, sucked their thumbs and gazed wonderingly at the queer procession.

Only the men were silent and savage. Most of them were of the cruel Somali breed, with long braided hair, bare to the waist, and ugly knives within reach. As Paul Rodgers stalked proudly through

the ranks of these natives, they fell aside. Some of them spat their hatred. Others murmured their amazement at his fiery red hair.

"The red hair of the devil!" they muttered to each other.

Preceded by the drummers and the trumpeters, bounding along the dusty path to their own mad cacophony, Paul Rodgers and the blind Kharput were led toward the entrance of the cave of many treasures. Half-naked guards clutching spears stood at attention as the two trussed men were pushed into the cave.

The transition from the blinding sunshine was not so great as Rodgers had expected. It seemed that the gaping mouth of the cave exhaled a warm breath. For it was crowded with a seething mob of men, all brandishing weapons, while the light of a hundred torches blazing from the walls showed their oiled and powerfully knit bodies.

The roar of that crowd, echoing throughout the cave, met the prisoners like a clap of thunder. Men fell apart to permit a pathway. And the Intelligence officer, a slight smile on his serious face, strode forward. The blind Kharput followed hesitantly behind. They walked across the vast floor of the cave, and were then confronted by a double row of massed guards, all clutching spears and all naked to the waist. From somewhere behind them came a sharp, shrill command. Rodgers was already familiar with that voice. But even as the guards wheeled and fell apart, the magnificence of Sari Mansur exceeded his expectations.

SHE sat easily and yet regally on the throne. She was decked out as a queen—as the Queen of Sheba. A yellow silk robe, which glittered with diamonds as she moved a slim arm, enveloped her from the proud, erect head to the tips of her satin shoes. The black, coiled hair with its sheen as of the finest lacquer was a voluptuous background to her beautiful face. The dark eyes, with a suggestion of lazy passion in them, gazed down upon the two prisoners. And the brown velvet skin seemed to take on a sheen in the glow of the many torches.

Those carmined lips opened to speak.

"So, my dear Paul Rodgers, we meet again."

The Intelligence officer bowed.

"As you intended, Sari Mansur," he said.

The slumbrous eyes seemed to awake.



"I am invariably addressed as the Queen," she said. "I should be careful, my friend. Some of my soldiers may understand English. They obey the slightest command of their queen, the Queen of Sheba."

"So I have discovered," replied Rodgers. He indicated his trussed arms. "They obviously consider me too dangerous to appear as a free man in your presence. Yet I think I recall an occasion when these two arms held you one night in Aden, in no affair more terrifying than an ordinary waltz."

She bit her lip. Obviously his raillery piqued her. She glanced round swiftly and demanded:

"Where is the Galla man who brought these men to the cave?"

The Galla leader was thrust forward. He cringed before the magnificence of the throne.

"Your Majesty—" he faltered.

"How dare you bring these men bound like dogs into my presence? Do you imagine I am afraid of them?"

"Your Majesty—they are dangerous."

"Dangerous!" She flashed it back at him. "You shall learn who is the most dangerous person in the hill of the Golden Calf." She made a sign to the guards, who promptly seized the Galla man. "Chain him to the wall," she commanded. "His sentence shall be decreed later."

As the guards were about to hustle the man away, Rodgers stepped forward.

"May I ask a favor?" he demanded of Sari Mansur.

"So!" she replied, glancing down at him. "You begin to ask favors so soon?"

"This is a very slight favor."

"What is it?"

"This villainous Galla man, when he seized me, possessed himself of several useful objects. Might I have my watch back from this brigand?"

"Your watch!" She laughed. "By all means. Search the Galla man," she commanded the guards. "And cut the bonds of these two men. They are harmless."

A few moments later, rubbing his arms to restore the circulation, Rodgers saw that the woman on the throne was gazing in an amused fashion at a watch that had been handed to her.

"How you Westerners are dominated by this toy called Time," she murmured, holding the watch in the palm of her hand. "At least I should have thought that Paul Rodgers would have learned from the East that true wisdom comes in despising Time."

Rodgers smiled.

"Nevertheless, I am rather anxious to know the right time," he replied banally.

"Even though before the sun sets you will be dead?" she asked.

"All the more reason that I should know the right time," he said. "A condemned man counts his minutes."

"Then count yours," she replied brusquely, tossing the watch toward him. "It is exactly ten minutes past one."

HE caught the watch deftly and regarded it.

"Thank you," he nodded. "Then I may expect death within the next six hours?"

"Perhaps in the next six minutes," she said sternly. "This is no time for foolery, Paul Rodgers. You and I come to the final reckoning."

"That is why I am here," said Rodgers. "The final reckoning, Sari Mansur. I am ready for it."

"And so am I," she said slowly.

Her dark eyes gazed upon this man as though she would mesmerize him. He returned her gaze without flinching.

"I have waited long for this moment," she went on slowly. "And I tell you that I do not intend that this moment shall be a brief one. Moments, my dear Rodgers, can be prolonged. Death can be prolonged. In fact, I shall give you the exquisite pleasure of gazing at that toy watch of yours and teaching you how death can be prolonged."

"I rather gathered that something of that kind was intended," said Rodgers.

Once again he glanced at his watch. At exactly half-past one the explosion

should occur—that is, if his work in the tent on those leaden cigars had been correct. But one could not tell within half an hour.

"And your companion, here," went on Sari Mansur. "A poor, miserable blind fool. Who is he?"

"He deserves more than a second glance from you, Sari Mansur," said Rodgers sternly. "Look well at those sightless eyes. They are your handiwork."

"Really!" She gave a little laugh. "Then the work was done badly. He should never have been allowed to live. Perhaps you will recall the occasion to me?"

"He came here, a brave man with a brave man," said Rodgers. "His name is Kharput. And his companion was Lieutenant Conway. Ah! I see the name is not unfamiliar to you."

"Conway was a fool!" she muttered. "As are all those who serve the powers of Europe."

"I too serve one of those powers," retorted Rodgers.

She smiled down at him.

"But at least you are the least foolish of all the fools," she said. "Once, Paul Rodgers, I asked that you join me in creating a kingdom among these savages. You refused."

"Well?"

"Look around you, my friend, and see the treasure-cave of Sheba. Diamonds by the thousand. Beyond, in those dark corridors, is a reef of gold. And a pool of rubies. A fortune that would make you a millionaire ten times over! And a throne that will be placed alongside this one. Sitting in that throne, Paul Rodgers, you could become more powerful than that great monarch of medieval times, Prester John. For the last time I give you the choice—life or death."

Once again Rodgers glanced at his watch. Twenty minutes past one.

"I choose death," he said quietly.

IT was as though he had struck her across the face. A flush crept beneath the brown sheen. Her jeweled hand clutched the throne, so that her knuckles gleamed almost white.

"And this broken blind fool," she said, indicating Kharput contemptuously. "He too, I suppose, chooses death."

The blind Armenian drew himself to his height. And when he spoke—

"I have come here to kill you!" he said simply.

She stared, amazed at him. Then the absurdity of the situation seized her. She began to laugh, uncontrollably. And in respectful emulation of their queen, the whole massed barbaric crowd in that cave laughed. The walls roared and echoed to their titanic laughter. Only the blind man stood there, unmoved.

AT last she recovered herself. Her shrill voice commanded silence. It fell like a blanket over the crowd. Rodgers still had his gaze upon the watch.

Twenty-five minutes past one.

"You have a droll companion, Rodgers," said Sari Mansur at last. "I think I understand. His brain has cracked."

"On the contrary, he is deadly sane."

"Well, at least, as prisoners, you are diverting," said Sari Mansur. "In the next few minutes your screams under the torture will divert us further. And this time I will make certain that your brains crack, and madness babbles on your lips. But while sanity is still in you, I am curious to know the answer to a question."

"Yes?"

"Why do you refuse treasure, a throne, illimitable power, and—myself?"

Rodgers gazed unflinchingly into those lazily passionate eyes.

"Because," he said calmly, "I want nothing. I intend to destroy the treasure. The throne is to the real Emperor of Abyssinia; the power is his; and as for yourself—you will soon be dead."

"Killed by this blind fool, eh?" she said.

"I shouldn't be surprised," Rodgers commented coolly.

"And when is this interesting event to happen?" she sneered.

Once again he looked at his watch.

"In exactly two minutes," he said.

She leaned back on her throne. For a fleeting moment she gazed about her in frightened fashion. Then, with an effort, she recovered herself.

"So you would bluff until the very end, Paul Rodgers," she sneered. "Well, I can bluff too. I have only to raise my hand, give a sign, and a dozen spears would be plunged into your body. Maybe you think you can frighten me into killing you swiftly, and thus letting you escape the prolonged torture. Well, I call your bluff. Give me that watch! We will wait the two minutes for the death you threaten me with. And when those minutes are ended, your torture will begin. —To the pit with them!"

She gave a sharp command. Rodgers and the blind Kharput were seized. The watch was torn from his hand and given to her.

"Death comes to me at half-past one, eh? Or the beginning of death to you."

Rodgers and Kharput were led down a few steps to the bottom of a sort of railed pit. At that same moment a powerful Sudanese native stepped forward. In his big black paw he held one of the torches. He stood at arm's-length from the prisoners. Rodgers realized that the first act would be to plunge that torch into his eyes. He would be blind, like the miserable Armenian.

"One minute to go!" mocked Sari Mansur, leaning over the railing to watch her victims. And the chiefs of her court also crowded about the rail to watch.

Perspiration came to the brow of Paul Rodgers. Supposing he had bungled his work? A drop too little of the acid, and the explosion would be retarded for at least a half-hour. And in that time these black devils could do unthinkable things to his body.

"Thirty seconds!"

In those fleeting moments he thought of those brave men who had failed in the encounter with Sari Mansur, the Queen of Sheba: Conway, found insane and dying in the desert by a British patrol in Somaliland. Webster Smith, sold as a slave and beaten to death. Tomlinson, staggering into the room at Aden, a knife pricking his heart.

Was he then to join the legion of heroic failures?

"Ten seconds!"

He had been a fool to bluff this woman, a fool to gamble upon a chance matter of explosives. Well, it was best to accept the inevitable.

"Half-past one!"

With a contemptuous smile, she tossed the watch at his feet. There was a tense silence in that huge cavern.

"I said you could watch the time passing on that toy watch," she said. "But I think your eyes had better look into yourself. You choose your own bitter end, Rodgers. I warned you; and—"

WHITE flame tore the walls of the cavern. It flung all from their feet. Another flame. The roof began to tumble. Rocks crashed down, smashing men like skittles. Paul Rodgers crawled to his feet. He saw the blind Kharput groping up the short flight of steps toward the shattered throne. The blood-red sash

was loose and held in his hands. The Armenian fumbled for a moment, then with a savage snarl of triumph wrapped it round the throat of the Queen of Sheba.

Amidst the yells and pandemonium, the Sudanese negro with the torch rose to his feet. He saw the blind man strangling the queen, saw the torture in her eyes. Grasping a torch, the negro leaped forward. But by this time Rodgers had grasped a weapon, a fallen spear. He hurled it, desperately. It caught the Sudanese between the shoulders. He lurched, dropped the torch, and fell gurgling to the ground.

Another blinding flash. It was then that the torrent of crumbling rocks and sand poured into the cave, sweeping all before it. Men were swirled away, screaming and shouting. Torches disappeared. The entrance to the cave had been blocked. Rodgers was swept off his feet. He rolled against Kharput.

"Into the corridors of gold!" shouted the blind man. "It is our only chance."

Desperately they plunged toward the blackness beyond.

AS Rodgers looked back over his shoulder, he glimpsed something of the mad chaos revealed by the few torches that still held in the walls. The throne, on which Sari Mansur had reclined in splendid majesty, was now half buried in sand and broken rock. And beside it was an almost submerged figure, a blood-red scarf trailing away from her neck. The distorted face of the Queen of Sheba grinned up at the shining diamonds embedded in the roof of the cave of treasures.

"M'sieur! I beg of you!" implored Kharput.

Rodgers yielded to the tugging hand, and he found himself struggling upward along an ever-narrowing gallery. They had not proceeded a hundred yards when another explosion reached them. It was followed by the crashing tumble of tons of rock. They were completely entombed in the corridors of gold.

Gold! Rodgers was clutching the slimy reef at his side and over his head as he struggled along in the darkness. All light had gone. Only a hot blackness was left. The despairing realization came to him that, although he had destroyed the cave of treasure and seen the Queen of Sheba strangled, his own agony was to be prolonged in this steaming darkness.

"But there must be a way out, m'sieur," muttered the struggling figure of the Armenian at his side.

That human mole, the blind Kharput, took the lead. Red Rodgers scrambled through the fallen rock and followed.

THREE days later a British camel patrol composed of six Somalis, under the command of a British officer, were defying international law and maneuvering beyond the demarcated line between British Somaliland and Abyssinia. An Arab boy Abdul, riding in front of a Somali, was the first to shrill something and point into the desert. The patrol rode rapidly to the sand heap to which he had pointed.

Two ragged, disheveled figures were sprawled helplessly in the sand. They gave no sign of life. Their faces were blackened by the sun. And already the wind-whipped sand was burying them.

The officer propped up one of the figures. The burnous slipped away revealing a tousled mop of red hair. He forced his water-bottle to the blackened lips. In a few minutes, the closed eyes blinked and opened.

"Hello!" he muttered, with a distorted grin.

"Thank God, I came in time," said the British officer.

"I'm all right," said Rodgers, trying to stagger to his feet. "What about Kharput—the Armenian?"

The Somalis had already revived the blind man. He was moaning feebly.

"A blind man!" said the British officer in surprise. "A queer companion for Intelligence work, Rodgers."

"But the best I've ever had," replied Rodgers. "Take us to your camp. We're both all in."

"You bet!" nodded the officer. "And I don't mind telling you I've a bottle of champagne on ice waiting for you. What d'you think of that?"

"Not bad," said Rodgers, swaying slightly. "You don't happen to have a piano in the camp by any chance?"

The officer stared. Obviously, the man's wits were wandering.

"The nearest piano is at Berbera, on the coast," he said.

"Then as soon as we've emptied your bottle of champagne, we'll be pushing on to the coast," sighed Red Rodgers.

And he stumbled like a drunken man toward the camel. The blind Kharput, assisted by the Somalis, followed.

Teak Wallah

By REGINALD
CAMPBELL

Truth may be as interesting—yes, and as strange—as fiction. And for this reason we print each month a group of true stories by our readers. (For details of this Real Experience contest, see page 3). First one of our English readers tells of his adventures as a forester in Siam.

I HAD said farewell to all my naval friends, and was running away from sea to the land: a reversal of the usual prelude to adventure, I knew; but for me ships and seas and the roll of a man-of-war held nothing of romance, however much they might appeal to others. I loved the land, with its ever-changing moods; for me land promised adventure, and I looked like getting it, bound as I was for the distant teak forests of northern Siam. A forest assistant in the teak jungles was what I, an ex-naval-officer, had surprisingly become.

At Singapore I left the ship in which I had traveled from Liverpool, and joined the little S.S. *Kuala*. A three-day trip in her up the Gulf of Siam brought me to Bangkok, the capital of Siam. In Bangkok I bought my camp-kit, plus stores like flour and sugar and tea, after which I caught the train for the north.

On the first day the train passed through dull, flat land: first paddy-land, then mere tufted swamp devoid of any interest. On the second day, however, we struck rolling hills, clad in thick, dark-green jungle, and I had glimpses of foaming, amber-colored rivers swirling round rocks as the train passed over deep ravines. Thirty-six hours after leaving Bangkok the train rolled into Nakon, one of the largest native towns of the north and the headquarters of the British



teak firms operating under Siamese Government license. The forest manager of my firm met me and took me to his comfortable compound.

In Nakon I remained a month, mainly for the purpose of learning a little of the language, which in northern Siam is Lao. I also bought a pony, a rule of the firm being that each forest assistant should possess at least two ponies for riding. This was a light chestnut of very pleasing appearance named Sunstar. Later both myself and others were to call him the Yellow Peril, but of that more anon.

It was on a pouring morning in July that I first set out into the wilds to join Orwell—who was one of our senior forest assistants in charge of the Muang Ngow forest, four days' march from Nakon—mounted on Sunstar, and with two baggage elephants carrying the tent and camp furniture I was to use in the future, plus half a dozen Lao and Kamoo coolies carrying the lighter articles of my kit.

The first day's march was the shortest—a bare ten miles—but before reaching the village of Sadet, where we were

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to camp, the river Mae Wang had to be crossed, and we found it in semi-flood. The elephants took the river first, and mighty fine it was to see and hear their great legs threshing through the surging yellow water. Sunstar was then unsaddled and towed across by my pony-boy, and then I and the coolies struggled over, half-wading and half-swimming.

Having reached the village, the party made for its temple, which was surrounded by the usual compound and outhouses. To my astonishment, my camp furniture was taken right into the temple itself and my bed set up directly in front of the great bronze Buddha on its pedestal. I glanced somewhat fearfully at a yellow-robed priest and his novices who were watching the proceedings, but they merely smiled amiably at me and appeared to take the whole thing as a matter of course. Nowhere in the world can religion be more kindly and tolerant than in Siam.

The next day we struck a cart-road winding through forest. I was to journey along that fifty-two-mile road from Nakon to Muang Ngow on many occasions: in heat and in shadow, in rain and in mist, in sickness and in health; yet I never ceased loving it. I loved its grandeur where it climbed up through the great portals of rock guarding the pass leading down into the Mae Ngow watershed, rock portals where monkeys whooped and the panther coughed raggedly; I loved its little villages dotted along its length; I loved the little streams one encountered every few miles; I loved even its long stretches of mud in the rainy season. Ah, you who flash along in motorcars, you cannot guess at the joys of traveling along a lonely road with pony and elephants!

On the fourth morning after leaving Nakon we struck paddyfields. On the further side of them we forded a yellow, swirling river, the Mae Ngow river. The little village of Muang Ngow lay along the opposite bank, and I rode slowly between the rows of shanties and market stalls to the compound of the Company.

A powerfully built man in khaki shorts, white shirt and white topee, with a big, very clean-shaven face, advanced to meet me.

"Orwell, I presume."

Stanley was greeting Livingstone!

FOR three weeks I toured round Orwell's forest in company with Orwell himself. Briefly, this forest consisted of

the whole of the basin (or watershed) of the river Mae Ngow and its numerous tributaries. The lower half of the basin was closed for afforestation purposes when I arrived, but the top half, which was open, had contained originally about a hundred thousand marketable teak trees, all of which were being gradually felled, logged, measured, hammered and then dragged down to the Mae Ngow river for "ounging" into the big main river Mae Yome by elephant. Once the logs had reached the Mae Yome, they would float more or less unattended down to the rafting stations some two hundred miles to the south, where they would be made up into rafts before completing the final three-hundred-mile journey to the saw-mills of Bangkok. The average time, I gathered from Orwell, it took for a log to reach Bangkok after being placed in the Mae Ngow was five years.

THE first job Orwell showed me was "inspecting felling." A teak tree in falling usually cracks a little, and it was part of Orwell's job to see that the headman in charge made plenty of allowance for the crack without unduly wasting timber.

After a few days of this sort of thing, we moved to another part of the forest to watch and inspect elephants working at the stump. Here the felled trees had been cleared of debris and "logged," and the elephants were engaged in pushing and prodding the logs down the steep and sodden hills, to where more elephants were dragging more logs along specially constructed paths. The elephants, I gathered from Orwell, lived almost natural lives in their natural surroundings, working only a few hours a day and then being hobbled to rest and graze at will in the jungle.

Here let me say that there can be no animal of more absorbing interest and fascination than an elephant. To the ordinary man in the street at home it is perhaps rather a comical creature, one about which he thinks in circus terms and as giving rides to children at the Zoo; in reality, however, he does not know what an elephant looks like, for he has only seen a few placid females. A great tusker in its own surroundings resembles them no more than a heavyweight boxing champion resembles some fat little housewife.

By this time I was beginning to become painfully aware of the numerous pests that inhabit the jungle in the rains.

First and foremost were the mosquitoes, which all day long plastered the bare portions of one's anatomy, never allowing a moment's rest.

Then there were leeches, my "*bêtes noires*," quite literally. These looped along the ground when they smelled one, waving their disgusting, sightless heads to get their direction, then wormed their smooth, thin, black bodies through the lace-holes of your jungle-boots and, fastening on as you walked along unsuspectingly, fed to repletion.

Sweat-bees there were, also. And ticks—tiny, round things, with myriads of tiny legs and a shell-like back, that fastened on you unawares, and fed till they swelled after the manner of the leeches. Sand-flies were another joy. They flourished near elephant-camps, and usually came to the attack just as you were dropping off to sleep. Of course there were ants, the caroty-red ones that fell on you from bushes and stabbed you as though with red-hot needles being the worst.

ON the first morning after our return to the compound for a rest, Orwell strode into my room about six o'clock, and I raised a sleepy head.

"Come on!" he shouted. "A mahout's just reported that one of our elephants has died suddenly at—" He mentioned a locality about six miles away. "We've got to go out and inspect the body. I've ordered your pony-boy to saddle Sunstar, and we'll ride there."

I hastily pulled on my kit and rushed out into the compound. Orwell's gray mare, a brute of an animal, with the devil in her eye and hoofs that were best avoided, was already saddled and standing by the compound gates, and so was Sunstar.

When I approached my mount, however, he proved to be a very different animal from the one on which I had ridden out from Nakon; he was circling round and round my pony-boy, who was holding the reins, and when I neared to mount him he rose up on his hind-legs; at which I, who was no Buck Jones, stroked my chin and regarded him dubiously.

"Excitement," said Orwell, with that irritating calmness of good riders. "Excitement at being with another pony. He'll soon get over it."

He certainly showed no signs of doing so now. But with the courage of despair I made a grab at him and flung myself on his back. Next second total dark-

ness descended on me as Sunstar shot forward like a catapult with a jerk that brought my topee down over my face.

A queer feeling, rushing along at a good many miles per hour on horseback without being able to see a thing, and one that I don't wish to have repeated. Luckily the topee suddenly slipped off of its own accord, and I found I was careering madly down the street of the little village. Ahead of me men, women, children, pariahs, pigs and hens were spraying out of my way like flying-fish fanning out before the bows of a ship, but providentially all got clear of me in time and I reached the end of the village without killing anyone. Finally the waters of the Mae Ngow river, which ran across the road below the hamlet, brought Sunstar up short, and a few seconds later Orwell flashed up anxiously on the gray mare.

We turned and together rode back through the village and then along the six miles of cart-road that separated us from the elephant casualty. The journey was only made at all possible through Orwell keeping his mare at a walking pace; months later I discovered that Sunstar had been a racing pony in his youth, with the result that he had become imbued with the idea that any pony in sight must at once be passed at full speed!

I NEVER thought I'd live to be glad to see a dead elephant, but when at last the carcass hove in sight in a clearing on one side of the road, I dismounted with a sigh of relief. I soon forgot my own small troubles, however, at the pathos of the huge, still body. On the great head was a tiny blue forest flower, placed there by the mahout to speed the parting spirit, and the brown man himself was there, looking sad and slightly frightened. He salaamed to Orwell and began talking rapidly to him in Lao, every now and then pointing to the ground in different parts of the clearing.

"He's saying," Orwell explained to me, "that the elephant was perfectly well yesterday evening, but that it had lain down and got up again a good many times during the night. Must have been in awful pain, poor brute. Come round with me and we'll have a look at the orifices. And take care of your hands. Don't touch any part of the body."

We went delicately round the huge mound of flesh, to see that the orifices were exuding blood. Orwell whistled.

"Anthrax," he said. "All the signs. Those cursed village cattle have been grazing here, I'll be bound. They're simply stiff with it." He glanced at his watch. "I'll ride back to the compound now at once. You can follow later. Got to send out orders for all other elephants in the district to be taken away, and to arrange for the body to be burnt. There's nothing more contagious than anthrax."

So the gray mare galloped off up the cart-road, raising fountains of mud behind her heels, and after a suitable interval I mounted Sunstar. He was still just as excitable as before, however, and in an instant was off hot-foot after the mare, I hanging on as best I could.

Somehow, in spite of mud-holes, sharp twists in the road, overhanging branches, and a dozen other different kinds of snags, I survived those nightmare six miles, only to meet disaster when in sight of safety. For Sunstar took the turning into the compound gates at such a speed that he ran into the fence, and I was thrown over his head, my face hitting, first the fence, and then the ground as I crashed down on to it.

When I came to, I staggered to my feet, blood pouring from me. Sunstar—he earned the additional name of the Yellow Peril from that instant—was unconcernedly cropping the grass, and reeling past him, I made my way shakily over the compound toward the office.

The results of that fall were a badly broken nose which, in the absence of any doctor, had to re-set itself as best it could, a black eye and bruised cheek-bone, and a lump on my forehead the size of an egg.

As soon as I was more or less recovered, I was sent out into the jungle "inspecting exhausted areas," a rotten job necessitating hunting through worked-out parts of the forest for logs carelessly left behind by headmen. While employed in this fashion I had several most unpleasant experiences with snakes.

ON the first occasion I was resting after tea in my camp-chair with my feet up on a camp-stool. Suddenly I heard a slithering noise on the ground-sheet below me and to my left, and, turning my head, beheld the tail end of a cobra disappearing under my chair. The slithering noise then stopped abruptly, which told me that the snake had also stopped—right beneath me!

For a while I sat, frozen as motionless as a statue in the chair. Seconds passed,

with neither sound nor movement from either the snake or myself. Then the horrible thought occurred to me that it might be climbing up the back of the chair—at which a great wave of fright seemed to rise up inside me and caused me to perform a feat which I consider to this day a physical impossibility: still in the seated position, and with my legs straight out before me as though they were yet on the stool, I catapulted myself clean out of the chair, over the stool, and out onto the tent veranda.

A FORTNIGHT later I had a similar experience, at the same time of day and as I was resting after work in exactly the same position. To have two snakes entering one's tent so soon after each other is a remarkable coincidence, and when, later, I told another teak wallah about it, he said:

"H'm, *I've* been in the country fifteen years without having had a snake in my tent once. *You* get a couple in within a few months. Quite extraordinary!"

"It is, isn't it?" I remarked innocently.

And it wasn't till four years later, during the whole of which time I never had another snake in my tent, that I realized he thought I was lying like a trooper.

Orwell came out on a trip to see how I was getting along with my work, and as we were inspecting both his and my traveling elephants in the evening, the mahout of the last one in line said:

"*Ngu nyai*, master. Big snake." And swinging round on his charge's head, he pointed back up the little path that ribboned out of the clearing. "It hissed at me and my elephant as we passed by it up there."

"A python, I expect," said Orwell laconically to me. "These fellows are always pretty vague. Come on. I'll bring my gun."

We went into his tent. He had brought only a shotgun, and as ordinary shot like Nos. 4, 6 and 8 wouldn't be of much avail against a really large snake, he was beginning to look doubtful when he came across one cartridge of buckshot.

"Just the thing," he said, slipping the cartridge into one barrel of his gun. "And now for friend python."

We began walking up the path, the mahout following behind on foot and a mob of curious coolies trailing behind.

After we'd gone a few hundred yards the mahout casually informed us we had reached the spot. He then, together with the coolies, retreated across the

bed of a little stream near by, leaving Orwell and me on the path by ourselves. Expecting a python, we looked up at the trees, but could make out nothing.

"Well," called Orwell after a while to the mahout behind us, "where is the snake?"

"At your feet, master," was the unexpected reply.

And it was—literally. Glancing down, I saw, just within the scrub that bordered the path, an evil head with a flattened hood behind it, and a long blackish body with gray-white marks on the back tapering away into deeper jungle.

"Steady," said Orwell, his voice dropping to a whisper. "It's not a python. It's a hamadryad."

I hadn't been in Siam long; nevertheless I had heard all I wanted to about the hamadryad, or king-cobra. Unlike other snakes, which if not asleep glide away on the approach of humans, the hamadryad will not only not give way; it is more than likely it will attack, especially if its eggs are near, and as its speed is said to rival that of a galloping horse over a short space of ground, and its bite is deadly poisonous, I knew that Orwell and I were in a bad position.

"Keep absolutely still," I became aware that my companion was whispering again. "I'm going to shoot."

Slowly—maddeningly slowly, it seemed to me—he raised gun to shoulder. And all the time those unblinking, deadly-cold eyes were staring at my legs only a few inches away from them. At last his gun crashed—whereupon we both cast off all caution and fled for our lives. But we needn't have feared; when we gingerly returned to examine the body, we found that the horror's head had been blown clean off by the buckshot, though even then we made it thirteen feet six inches long. Complete with head it must have gone to over fourteen feet, and as fifteen is the outsize for a hamadryad, Orwell had shot a pretty specimen.

EVERY six weeks or so, I had gathered from Orwell, an exceptionally heavy downpour would turn the Mae Ngow into a band of yellow, swirling water deep enough to float the heaviest log. These rises rarely lasted for more than a few hours, so it was very important that the timber be kept moving continuously if full advantage were to be taken of every precious minute of the rise. One of these rises occurred on a day when I happened

to be near the river after two or three weeks spent inspecting timber up some side-streams, and mounted on a placid old bull elephant, I watched Orwell directing operations from his position on the back of another.

IS there any spectacle, I wonder, that I can surpass in magnificence the sight of twenty or thirty elephants, all in the prime of condition and in their natural surroundings, "ounging" timber down a swollen jungle stream? *Crash!* A great teak log collides with a rock head-on and swings round broadside to the current. The other end is caught by a jutting-out portion of the opposite bank, and the river is blocked from one side to the other. More logs are riding down upon the first. *Boom! Boom!* Hollow and sullen. A jam is forming. "Four tuskers down here, quick!" roars Orwell. "What's that? The water's too deep? Nonsense. Get your elephants in!"

They're right under the stack now, having approached it from below. Careful, warns the boss. That's it, the key log! Poo Noi's tusks are under one end of it, but what's wrong with Poo Luang? The ends of his tusks are too sharp, and they're slipping on the smooth surface! Orwell makes a note to cut three inches off them this evening, orders Poo Koo to take Poo Luang's place, then yells for them all to lift together.

The key-log moves, and a moment later the whole stack dissolves with a crackling roar on top of mahouts and elephants. See them now, Poo Noi, Poo Luang, Poo Koo, Poo Ten, fighting for their lives in all the grandeur of their strength. Huge as they are, they lunge with lightning swiftness in order to splay the logs apart; tusks flash, trunks shoot and curl, huge foreheads fend off great balks that would crush a man to instant death, and the mass is flattened out and once more on the move.

The uproar as we go up and down the river is terrific. The trumpeting and bellying of elephants, *swooshes* of collapsing portions of the bank, the crackling and booming of timber, yells of mahouts and chainmen, the thrumming of the stream—these and other sounds combine to make one great blare of noise. My ears are filled with a strange orchestra, my eyes with swift movement, while in my nostrils is the smell of moist earth and rain-blown wind. . . . I have known what it is to be alive today.

Further episodes in the life of a "teak wallah" will be described in an early issue.

Alone with a Madman

IN the winter of 1924 I was trapping fur in the northern part of the Province of Alberta. I had with me a Scotsman named Bill Erskine. We had made a big catch of fox, marten, beaver, mink, several hundred muskrats and a dozen fisher; and the season was not half over when on the 20th of December, Bill fell through the ice when crossing the river.

When he disappeared under the ice, I kicked off my snowshoes and raced downstream to a spot a hundred yards below where the river was open, and great hummocks of ice performed a fantastic dance in the swirling waters. Here, standing in mid-river on the ice below the break, I waited for what to me was an eternity; then suddenly, an ice-cake heaved over at my feet, and the leathery hand of my partner appeared. I grabbed him.

Fortunately, the accident took place beside our headquarters cabin, and I had little difficulty in dragging him to safety and warmth. But his clothing was like a board before I got him in, for the temperature was forty degrees below zero.

That evening Erskine complained of pains in his chest; and as the night wore on, and his breathing became more labored, I knew he was in for pneumonia.

At the end of the fourth day my meager stock of aspirin and laxatives was gone, and the only thing I had left was mustard—and already his chest and back had been poulticed to a mass of raw meat. He was delirious now, and I could not leave him for a moment lest he walk out into the snow and perish. My own sleep was only fitful naps, lying across the doorway.

On the seventh day Bill's temperature soared to one hundred and five degrees and his poor wrinkled face became blue. But in the evening he suddenly cooled down to ninety-six and fell into a restful sleep. However, a few days later he expressed the wish that I go to Carl Larsen, who was trapping eighty miles away, and get him to help me to take Bill to "the outside," as he believed that to stay on would be a burden to me. I did not relish the thought of Bill's leaving me, but I certainly did not want to leave his body bleaching in that forlorn spot; so next day at four-thirty of a moonlit win-

ter's morning, I put on my snowshoes and hit the trail.

Larsen was trapping on the other side of the mountain range to the west, and the surest way to get to him was to follow the valley south for twenty miles, cross a low pass to the west, then strike north again. Why, I reasoned, couldn't I scale the mountain on my left and drop down to Larsen's place and thus save thirty or forty miles?

This plan I decided to put into operation. I crossed the river, which we had named the Jinx, and headed for the lofty ridge which stuck up in the bright moonlight two thousand feet above me. The weather was calm and the temperature about zero, and I felt glad that I was alive as I strode along, my snowshoes whistling musically through the powdery snow. At five-thirty I commenced the ascent, and at eleven I was on the crest. But instead of a rib I discovered the mountain-top was at least a quarter of a mile wide and flat as a billiard-table.

TAKING my bearings, I struck out across the white expanse. Halfway over, great crevasses showed up here and there, and I realized that I was on a glacier. The farther I progressed, the more cut up became the surface over which I had to travel. Going north, south, east and west, I siwashed my way among those gaping canals of ice. Often I ran into a *cul-de-sac* and had to turn back. Occasionally the sun showed himself through a cold white haze in the north, but for which I should most certainly have been lost. At four o'clock, as the sun sank, I reached the edge.

A slight westerly wind was blowing as I commenced the descent, but before I was halfway down, the air became suddenly dead, the cold became intense, and in a few moments a blizzard struck, howling and shrieking like some avenging god armed with whips of steel. In a short time I was numbed with cold and half suffocated with snow-dust. To stop was to perish; so I stumbled and floundered blindly on and on and on.

How long it took me to reach the bank of a creek, or how I ever got there, I do not know; but some sixth sense guided me to a dim light peering through a huge

A weird and soul-shaking experience out of the lonely north woods.

By RUPERT JAMESLEIGH

pile of snow. I crept up to the light, and a big man came out and pulled me into a shack.

"Vere you been, an' vot you doin' on mine trap-line?" he demanded.

I told him where I had come from and where I was going.

"H-m-m-m!" was his only comment.

Fagged out, I threw myself down on his bed. My host paid no more attention to me, but went over and sat on a three-legged stool in front of a red-hot stove which he stoked from time to time. The heat of that one-roomed shack was stifling after the biting cold outside, and it brought on a fit of coughing which I thought would burst my lungs. Then my face, finger-tips and right foot came to life and ached worse than toothache.

My left leg felt warm because it was badly frozen to the knee. I mentioned this fact to the ginger-headed, cadaverous man whose unwilling guest I was, and asked him if he had any coal-oil with which I might rub out the frost, but he kept on staring at the stove as if in a trance. Thinking him to be deaf, I repeated my request in a louder voice. Slowly he turned toward me and smiled. Had I suddenly been confronted with a ghost, I would not have been more startled, for his were the eyes of a madman. I tried to repeat what I had said, but somehow my tongue was paralyzed. As soon as I got control of myself, I removed my moccasins and socks and started to massage my frozen foot. As I rubbed and pinched the hardened flesh, I often caught the huge man looking at me out of the corner of his eye with that awful cunning of the lunatic. His mangy black dog sat on the middle of the floor eyeing me disapprovingly. Several times it came over, sniffed at me, and growled.

I tried to get the man into conversation by asking him how far it was to Larsen's camp, but at mention of Carl's name he jumped off the stool, picked up a Luger pistol from the table and brandished it in my face, with a tirade of abuse concerning the many fur thefts he said Carl had perpetrated. I assured him that Larsen would not steal even a weasel from the trap of any man, but it was no use, for by now he was beside himself with rage, and went on squealing



in broken English, liberally punctuated with Swedish oaths, that neither Larsen nor I would see another sundown.

By this time the dog was aroused and circled the room, snarling and baring his teeth at me. Laughing and crying by turns, and shaking like a man with the palsy, the madman waved the barrel of his gun frenziedly in my face.

I knew a few wrestling tricks by which I might be able to throw and sew up my powerful antagonist, but I had the dog to contend with too. In my holster I had a loaded automatic, but if I used it, I would have to cripple the maniac badly. And what if he were fatally injured? Canadian law is very explicit as to the course it would take in such an event. I would have a very difficult job proving that the man was insane, and that I had had to kill in self-defense. So I sat nursing my leg, listening to the ravings of my inquisitor. Afterwhile he fell silent and sat staring at the stove.

WHEN the alarm clock on the table said one A.M., all was quiet. The dog was under the bed; his master was mumbling in his beard as he stared fixedly at the red-hot stove. Hunger had left and a severe thirst took possession of me. There was a bucket of water on the floor a few feet away from where I sat, but every time I made a move to get to it, the dog came out snarling and snapping at my legs. The mad trapper was seemingly unconscious of anything going on around him. The hours ticked off. Inside the shack, silence; outside, the storm raged on. At six o'clock the candle, perched on a piece of wood sticking out of the wall, sputtered and went out. The lunatic jumped off his stool and lit another candle, cursing me for all the expense I was causing him.

In another hour I hoped to be on the trail away from this accursed spot, but

how? Soon the single window-pane became gray. The trapper got up and went out, followed by the dog, who gave me a parting snarl as he passed. While they were out, I hastily put on my socks and moccasins and got my snowshoes in shape for a quick get-away.

"I guess I'll be off, now," I said when the pair returned.

"Like hell you vill!" the madman shouted.

There was a long piece of stove-wood handy. I picked it up and waited. The dog came toward me. When he was opposite, I lashed out with the piece of wood and caught him above the nose. Then I jumped on his ribs, and something cracked. Gun in hand, the madman rushed me. I stepped aside, caught his left wrist in my left hand, put my shoulder under his left armpit and hoisted him. He hit the uneven wooden floor with an awful thud which stunned him and he lay flat on his back with his head on one side. I got down on my knee and hit him on his exposed jaw several times with all my might, and he lay still. The dog lay beside him twitching and whining. I took the trapper's pistol and rifle and threw them out on the snow; then grabbing my snowshoes, I slipped them on and lit out. Although my foot was badly swollen, I did not feel any pain, so eager was I to put miles between me and my late tormentor. . . .

At about ten o'clock that morning I met Carl Larsen on the trail and recounted to him my strange experience.

"You're lucky to be alive," he said. "When Johnson is healthy, he is a dandy guy; but every once in a while he gets an awful pain in the side of his head, an' his stomach goes fluey. Then look out! I guess a fella should report it to the Mounties but—hell, that would be a dirty trick to play on the poor devil."

A year later the mad trapper was in the asylum. Last month I was walking down the street in Vancouver when some one suddenly grabbed me by the shoulder from behind. I turned around, and a tall, fair-haired man asked me if I recognized him. I told him that I did not. Together we went to a tavern near by, and over a glass of beer Johnson told me his story. After he had been admitted to the asylum, he had his teeth extracted and his tonsils removed; and in six months he was discharged—cured. He is now married, and is considered by the community in which he lives to be one of its most trustworthy members.

Steeplejack

The rescue of a wing-walker in serious trouble.

By

CLYDE H. SMITH

IT was back in the days when National Guard air squadrons were equipped with Hisso Jennys, and before parachutes were compulsory flying equipment. Anyway, Jack couldn't have used a 'chute if it had been available. He was tied to the ship and couldn't get loose.

Division air headquarters was established north of the division encampment in a field, not overly large, but big enough for safe operation of the eight Jennys. Lieutenant Carl, regular army pilot, was assigned to us as instructor.

Captain Raye was second in command of our little outfit, and about the finest pilot that ever put a Jenny through its paces. Jack was a buck private who had joined up just a couple of months before camp opened. His enlistment papers gave his age as twenty-four and his occupation as steeplejack.

The morning before the governor's visit Jack proposed his plan. He asked me if I would take him on my ship for a wing-walking act immediately after the review. He frankly admitted it would be a new experience for him, but he felt he could do it, since he was accustomed to high places. However, I declined, and referred him to Captain Raye.

A beautiful day dawned that fateful Tuesday, and at mess every man in the outfit, from the C.O. down, was keyed up. Mechanics spent most of the morning tuning up the ships while the others cleaned equipment and got everything in readiness for inspection of "Old Eagle-eye." By three-thirty the line troops had passed in review and we were in the air. In tight V formation we flew twice past the reviewing-stand, then broke formation and each went through his repertory of stunts. Then we landed. At least all but one of us, for when I climbed out of my ship, Raye was still in the air, swinging back over the reviewing stand at about three hundred feet. Out on his wing climbed a white-clad figure. So



Jack had persuaded him! Looking closely, I saw a rope looped under the right wing, one end tied to the axle of the plane, the other end to the wing skid.

Jack put on a good wing-walking act for an amateur. He stood on his head on the lower wing, hung by his knees from a strut and finally climbed to the upper wing, where he stood erect. He was to use the rope as his climax. He had placed a loop on the free end of the rope tied to the wing skid. He would sit in this loop, cut loose, and swing down under the ship. I'd seen it done before; it was a thrilling sight from the ground.

Easily, back and forth over camp Raye flew, expertly jockeying his ship to compensate for the changing load of his acrobat. Finally Jack was at the end of the upper right wing. Slowly he shinned down the strut and swung himself under the lower wing to the skid. In a few seconds he waved his arm, cut loose, and swung down beneath the ship, dangling there about twelve feet below the axle. Again the ship turned and passed over camp while the excited eyes of twenty-five hundred men looked on. Jack had placed knots in the rope at eighteen-inch intervals to assist him in climbing back up to the ship. Now he started up, pulling hard against the pressure of the wind. That would be a hard pull. The speed of the ship would add considerably to a man's weight. But Jack was accustomed to ropes and his occupation had taught him to handle himself well.

Halfway up the rope, Jack paused. He just hung there, apparently resting. Then he slowly sank back to the end of the rope, swinging in the slipstream.

A quiet voice interrupted my interest: "Lieutenant, Jack shouldn't have dropped down again! He can't get up! The propeller-blast is too strong for him."

"Oh, forget it," I replied. "Jack's been higher than that many a time and knows what he's doing."

But I looked up once more, just in time to see Jack sink slowly back to the end of his rope a second time. Captain Raye was leaning far out of his cockpit.

I grabbed some glasses, focused them hastily on Jack. His face was white, and he was mouthing words to Raye, who hung over the side of his cockpit.

Major Bill came toward me excitedly. "Lieutenant! Get up there and get that man onto your top wing! He can't climb that damn' rope, and Raye has only twenty minutes of gas left. If Jack doesn't get off that rope, Raye will have to land anyway, and somebody will be bumped off! Get going."

But I was already gone. In a few seconds ready hands turned my prop, and hardly waiting to warm her up properly, I gave her the gun and was in the air. As I cleared the trees my imagination worked like lightning. Just suppose Raye had to land with that boy dangling under his ship! What would Jack look like after that was over? But surely, Raye would take to the lake first!

Climbing quickly, I was soon level with Raye's ship at about three hundred feet. What was wrong? Raye shaking his head? What did he mean? In less time than it takes to tell, my left upper wing was just beneath Jack's feet. His tennis-shoes brushed my wing, but he too shook his head, gesticulating wildly with his free hand. He was motioning as though he were cutting the rope with a knife! And pointing to the lake, a quarter-mile away from the field. The lake? Suddenly it dawned on me. Jack couldn't get loose from his rope! The knot had slipped tight, so he couldn't untie it even if I could put him on my wing. And that knot would get tighter the longer he hung there. He was tied fast, couldn't get loose, and was too weak to climb up. He *had* to have a knife. Then Raye would drop him in the lake!

Quickly I nodded my comprehension as I side-slipped into the field.

ONCE on the ground, I yelled to the excited men: "Knives! Jack needs a knife! The knot on the rope has slipped tight, and he can't get loose! Raye will drop him in the lake! Somebody come with me and hand him a knife from my upper wing!"

A dozen or more pocket-knives came forth in no time. Barry, my own sergeant, came forward eagerly. Stuffing his pockets with knives, he clambered into my front cockpit, and away we went.

In the meantime, Lieutenant Carl had gone up in his DH with a man on his wing, holding a parachute. I knew his trip was useless, so that made it all the more necessary for us to succeed. We just had to get a knife into Jack's hands.

AS I turned to swing my ship beneath Raye's, Barry was out of the cockpit and climbing onto the upper wing, two knives clapsed in his teeth. We were under Raye. My wing brushed Jack's feet. Carefully Barry slid over to the end of the wing as I throttled down to Raye's slow pace. Anxiously I did my best to keep her level. But Barry was too heavy, or the Hisso wasn't turning up properly. Raye sensed this, and gave his ship full gun. I caught up as Barry slowly rose to his knees while I gave all the aileron I had to keep level. We *would* make it! No! Down went that wing as Barry came erect. Down dropped the nose! A spin, and at three hundred feet! I jammed the stick forward as I saw Barry flatten himself to the wing and slither over to the center. A half-turn. A full turn! The trees! Then I felt her grab the air and she leveled off, missing the treetops by inches, it seemed.

Up we went again, and soon were back in position. Slowly Barry rose to his knees with his hand outstretched. His hand touched Jack's. Jack spun around on his rope. Contact? No! Down went that damn' wing again as I struggled, raging, to keep it up. Barry had missed. Another spin! Would we get out of this one? Barry surely used his head that time. Talk about wing-walking! He made the quickest trip across that wing that was ever made over any plane. Hardly had we made one complete turn before he was lying flat on the center section. This time we did hit the trees, but with the trailing edge of the flippers.

No use trying that again. I just couldn't hold her up long enough for Barry to pass the knife. Barry was either too heavy, or the motor not up to par. Raving with disappointment and chagrin, I hopped the trees and landed.

But they had not been idle on the ground. Carl had landed when he learned a 'chute was of no use. Another dozen knives were forthcoming, and away Carl went again, a man on his right wing, claspings in his arms a campaign hat full of knives.

Barry hopped out and I took off again, in a cold sweat, but determined to see the end. At my best calculation Raye

had only five minutes of gas left. How futile our efforts must have seemed to him! All he could do was to sit there, throttle down as much as safety permitted to conserve gas, and wait for a knife. The lake was a quarter mile away, a ten-acre body of water, bordered on three sides by high trees. Raye would have to do some clever piloting to get in there and out again, low enough to do any good, and still not crash.

Carl was under Raye now. Out went the boy's hand. Jack spun on the end of his rope as his hand instantly grasped the knife. Contact on the first attempt!

Crowds of people were already at the lake awaiting breathlessly the climax of this thrilling aerial rescue. Straight as a homing pigeon Raye flew to the clear end of the lake, Jack dangling beneath his ship, smiling joyfully at me as I nosed alongside.

Surely, and carefully as a master, Raye glided over the clear border of the lake, accurately gauging his altitude so Jack would not have far to fall. And Jack did a good job of it. As he saw the water approaching, he pulled his legs above his head and hung in a ball, his back to the water. At just the right second, as Raye momentarily stalled the ship, up went Jack's hand. Down came the knife. One slash, and the rope was cut. He dropped about three feet to the water. Like a huge stone he skipped across the water for several yards before he sank. I turned back toward the field as Jack's head came above water and he swam slowly to an approaching rowboat.

Captain Raye had landed as I came in. He approached as I climbed from my ship.

"Good work, Raye," I said. "That was a real happy landing! Any gas left in your ship?"

"No," he said quietly, "I guess not. She cut out on me as I nosed into the field and I landed with a dead stick."

TEN days later a traffic jam stopped my car in front of Masonic Temple at home. While waiting for it to clear, I heard a voice calling: "Lieutenant! Lieutenant! Look up here!"

Leaning through the door, I looked up. There, at the top of a sixty-foot flagstaff in front of the Temple, was a figure. Sure enough! It was Jack, sitting in a rope swing, calmly painting away.

"Every man to his job," I mused, as traffic cleared and I went on to mine.



*After the Great War this reader
found equally desperate action in
the Spanish Foreign Legion.*



By
J. MCQUEEN-DESMOND

Two out of Twenty-three

I WAS one of that crowd of British ex-service men who went from England to join the Spanish army for active service in Morocco, soon after the close of the Great War. Spain offered free transportation and good pay; and we restless souls who couldn't fit back into relatively humdrum civilian life jumped at the chance, thinking we'd find the brawl in Morocco a picnic after France.

We speedily found out our mistake. Ricky Jordan, who had been a sergeant with me in France, and I went together; we joined the garrison of a fort on the southern fringe of Spanish territory, near foothills swarming with hostile natives.

The fort was just a three-roomed blockhouse with a triangular wall around it. On the inner side of the wall was a firing-platform like the fire-step in a trench. At each of the three corners was a machine-gun. The post commanded the point where four caravan routes, coming up from the remote interior, converged into a single road running north to the sea.

There were about one hundred and fifty of all ranks in the garrison, of which twenty-three (supposed to be a full platoon) were Britishers. The Spanish lack of efficiency amazed us. There was no provision made for water inside the fort. Every day supplies had to be fetched from a well nearly a mile away, out of sight round a shoulder of the hill. They used barrels in a wagon hauled by a dozen mules.

Every day there was a scattering of bullets from snipers back in the hills, and we expected to be rushed any time. About one day in five our platoon remained to hold the fort while the Spaniards escorted the water-wagon, and invariably they all went. When we were the escort, twenty-three were enough, but they went one hundred and twenty-five or so strong.

So the natives, instead of jumping the water-party, attacked the fort—on a morning when there were just we twenty-three Britishers to hold it. Furthermore, we had been issued precisely ten rounds of ammunition per man, and *none* for the machine-guns. Why, I do not know. The rest of the ammo was locked up in a small compartment in the blockhouse.

Of course when the attack commenced, our sergeant sent a couple of men to break open the door to the ammo dump, but it took them too long, and in any event we should have had our hands full beating off the attack.

The whole thing really took a very few minutes. There must have been five hundred Arabs at least, and they didn't charge blindly. They came in short rushes, from one rock to another, a few at a time, while the rest of them swept us with bullets.

Of course they lost men, and plenty too: all our fellows were veterans. But the silent machine-guns were fatal to us. Those wild-eyed devils made human ladders of themselves and came up over the wall like monkeys, seeming to be all eyes and teeth and flashing sword-blades. There was no question of surrender for the dozen or so of us left by that time.

WE met them with the bayonet, grimly determined to make them pay well for wiping us out. I can remember wondering whether the bite of a sword-blade would be more painful than the bullet I stopped in France, when a huge tribesman who had topped the wall farther along, rushed at me from one side.

It's funny what thoughts go through a fellow's mind at a time like that. I can remember noticing that everywhere the tribesmen had swarmed over the wall, and thinking that I was the last Britisher standing. And I remembered that I had one round left in my rifle.

I thrust my bayonet tip squarely against the lunging tribesman's chest and pulled trigger; and I believe that was the last shot fired. The Arab's momentum carried him forward as he fell; instinctively I stepped back, and pitched down to the foot of the wall ten feet below. My head cracked against something, and I went out like a puffed candle.

When I came alive, I was in the block-house, where I had been flung amongst a pile of stores—boxes of hardtack, sacks of dried dates and the like. Added to my amazement at being alive at all, was the fact that five others of our crowd were there too, including Ricky Jordan and Lockesley, the acting sergeant. All were battered and cut, but none seriously wounded. But the heat was frightful, and Ricky said that the tribesmen only jeered at him when he asked for water.

None of us could figure out why we hadn't already been killed or mutilated. Lockesley could understand something of Arabic, and he had gathered that the tribesmen who had jumped us were a kind of an advance guard of a great gathering of fighting-men who were moving northward, determined to drive the Spaniards into the sea. Only about fifty remained in the fort. Lockesley thought that the rest had gone to mop up our slack-brained O.C. and his men.

Once in a while a scowling tribesman looked in at us from the open doorway, spat in our direction and disappeared again. It was plain that the open door was no way of freedom for us. We were all in need of water, and my head ached terrifically. Then, after the worst night I can remember going through, shouts and shots sounded, then the stutter of a machine-gun on the wall.

Two tribesmen stood near the door for a minute, talking excitedly; and Lockesley listened, his mouth open in surprise.

"Well, fellows, I guess we'll know all the answers soon," he told us, when the Arabs had left. "They were saying something about 'Inglees.' That must mean it's our fellows with Colonel Sevron out there. These devils are hoping to hang on here until their main force turns up, but Sevron's mob'll swamp this mud pie in a hurry, an' that means we can wish ourselves good night."

By then the scattered firing had settled into a shrieking roar, and in a minute or so a bunch of tribesmen piled in on us. Of course we tried to fight, but we were in poor shape and they flattened us quickly. They pulled and kicked us out

into the open and tied us two and two, back to back, then dragged us up onto the fire-step on the wall. With hoots and jeers they forced us up into the line of fire; and at once a bullet ripped my upper arm and slugged the fellow tied with me, a cockney named Evans. He gasped once and went limp.

By the way the attackers' firing eased, I knew they had spotted us, but enough bullets were coming our way for me to know that they weren't all Britishers out there. I was shoved higher and got a bullet through the thigh, which turned me sick. At last the tribesmen tumbled us to the ground. Evans was dead, and I was in bad shape.

Just why the Arabs took the trouble to cut me loose and throw me into the storehouse, I never could figure. Lockesley and a fellow named Hart were heaved in after me, both of them wounded. I was near unconsciousness when I realized that Lockesley was pulling at me.

"Hey, Desmond, wake up, man, wake up!" he was growling in my ear. "Get over here, back of these date-sacks."

I didn't want to move, but at last I got to where Lockesley wanted me.

"They're catching hell now," Lockesley told me. "They'll lose this mouse-trap any time, an' they'll not forget to put *paid* to us, but we can have one crack at 'em. This box here is half full of grenades. Get ready to feed 'em to the devils when they come for us."

That woke me up right, and I wriggled to get fixed so that I could heave grenades at the door if I got the chance.

The din of firing grew deafening, and suddenly tribesmen filled the doorway.

"Now!" yelled Lockesley, and we heaved together from behind our barrier of stores. The world seemed to split open with a tearing crash, but I can remember throwing bombs blindly one after another till something fell on me.

IN a hospital tent some hours later, Lockesley told me the fort had been carried while we were throwing bombs. We had wrecked the building; and it fell in on top of us in chunks.

Hart was dead when we were finally found. Lockesley and I were the only survivors of our original twenty-three. Did we get any medals out of the mess? We did not. Our O.C. had got clear with his men, and his report was instrumental in getting for us a scathing reprimand—Lockesley in particular—for losing the fort to the enemy.

Earthquake

The newspapers called her a heroine, but she is too modest to accept the term.

By BETTY HUDSON

PERHAPS some of you readers will recall the sensation the Japanese earthquake caused a few years ago, also perhaps some of you will recall reading about a little girl, who, according to the newspapers, rescued her injured father, shielding him with her body from the flames of the fire which raged within fifty yards of them, and then next day marching for aid across miles of arid area, or what have you. Herewith follows the true tale of what occurred, by that same little girl—now grown up. You may judge for yourself who deserves the title *hero* or was the hero of the occasion.

It was September first, and we—my mother, father, sister and I—were on our way home to the United States from Borneo, where my father had been employed. Our steamship, the *Korea Maru*, docked at Yokohama, and was due to sail for San Francisco the next day. Dad and I that morning ventured ashore on a shopping tour.

Toward noon, our shopping finished, he and I started back to the ship. We were but a few blocks from the wharf where the ship was docked, when suddenly the earth began to sway. It was like trying to stand upright on a bucking bronco. The minute this started, Dad seized my arm and hurled me into the middle of the street. The air was filled with dust and débris. I was gasping for breath, suffocating. As suddenly as it had started, it stopped. The air cleared. The earth was quiet except for an occasional shudder. Dazed, I looked around; there was nobody standing near me. The buildings were in ruins, nothing left of them but a few stones. Where was Dad? There he was, lying on the ground. I stumbled over to him, and stood dumbly for a moment. He said quietly: "It was an earthquake, Betts." For a moment neither of us moved. Then I asked him to get up—and saw that his foot was crushed under one of the huge building stones. In saving me, he had himself been caught.



I tried to help him tug his foot free, but the pain was too great for us to succeed. The stone was too large for me to lift, so I looked around for some one to help me. By this time the panic-stricken Japanese were rushing screaming here and there; never in my life have I seen such frantic screaming mobs of people.

I was still too dazed to quite know what was happening. I remember catching at running Japanese and trying to get them to help Dad, but they knocked me aside and didn't seem to hear me. I had heard of mob action, but this was the first time I had ever seen it really close up. Some crazed people—I saw them—even rushed into burning buildings, there to roast, screaming. Others leaped into huge crevasses, which at the next tremor of the earth, closed. I stood and stared at the mob, all running, now, away from the water. Suddenly I wanted to go with them—so many people—they must know where safety lay. I begged Dad to get up and let us go with the mob. But he quietly soothed me, saying we had best stay where we were for a while, until maybe some white man would come along and help us.

Presently I became calmer and began to take stock of our situation. We were directly in the middle of the street; large building-stones lay piled around us. As it happened, this was lucky, else I am sure we would have been trampled to death beneath the feet of the panic-stricken people. As it was, they parted as they got to our little barricade and went to left and right.

We must have stayed in that spot for half an hour, but it seemed that time

stood still. I stood dumbly beside Dad, who lay silent; occasionally he tugged gently at his foot, then desisted, to lie back panting and white-faced.

At last we were aided by two American sailors who were on shore leave, and who, having escaped unscathed from the quake, were roaming around, helping where they could. The two managed to pry up the stone and pull out Dad's leg. His shoe, a high laced one, I remember, they had to leave under the stone, although I tried to pull it out too. The two sailors made a chair for him and carried him to the public park two blocks away. There they left us, promising to send help as soon as possible.

THE help the sailors had promised us did not come. Evidently they had been unable to get to the boat. At least that is what Dad thought as he lay there in the park on the soggy ground, hour after hour, awaiting aid that didn't come. I can well imagine, now, the terrible pain that he must have suffered, but at the time he said nothing—except occasionally to ask me to pull his injured foot out of the marshy ground into which it would sink. I would gently take hold of the tip of his sock, stiff with dried blood, and pull his foot free of the mud.

As night drew on, he told me to go to one of the Japanese families who, in the same plight as ourselves, had taken refuge in the park, and ask them for some covering against the chill of the night. The Japanese woman whom I asked gave me a heavy quilted kimono, all she could spare. I tried to share this with Dad, but he would have none of it. So I lay down beside him, covering myself with the kimono. Across the street and about one hundred yards away, fire was raging fiercely. Sparks came down among the trees of the park, some lighting on us where we lay. I still have the dress I wore at the time, and there are great holes burned in it by the sparks that night. When the heat from the fire and the burning sparks became too bad, I found an old door lying not far away, and dragged it over to where Dad lay. All through the night I held up this door to form a sort of protection against the heat of the fire. As the wind shifted, the fire shifted, and I shifted the door.

Once during the night Dad managed to purchase some water from a man who had drained the radiator of his car and was selling the water—the only water available, as the water-mains had burst.

Late in the middle of the next afternoon Dad paid a Japanese man and his wife to take me to Mother aboard the *Korea Maru*. He gave the man a few coins and a note to Mother, saying that the note meant she would give him more money if he got me to the boat safely.

The walk to the wharf was a nightmare. Dad had cautioned me against live electric wires which had fallen down across the street; so as we climbed over stones and rubbish in the street, I kept a wary eye out for wires. I counted seven dead men lying in all sorts of positions on the way to the dock. Some had been burned to death, and their eyes had boiled out of their sockets to lie upon their cheeks. The horror did not affect me at all at the time. When we came to the wharf where the *Korea Maru* had been, the Japanese man asked questions, then informed me that the *Korea Maru* had sunk with all on board her.

We trudged on, coming to a boat where some sailors were loading people. The Japanese man put me in it and presently I was climbing aboard a big steamer. I don't know how the next two hours passed: I remember eating a bowl of rice. Then I saw Dad: he was on a stretcher, and they were unloading him from the little launch. Later I was told that the Japanese man had put me aboard the launch of the *Empress of Australia*, and that I had told the purser of the *Empress* where they could find my father.

DAD and I were that afternoon put aboard the *President Jackson*, which was taking the refugees who most badly needed medical attention, to Kobe. There I was turned over to the American consul and an American lady who was living in Kobe at the time. Dad was taken to the hospital, where he hovered between life and death for two weeks, for gangrene had set in. I think perhaps the reason for his turn for the better was the unexpected arrival of my mother and sister, who had been sent as refugees to Kobe also. The tale of their adventures was fully as exciting as that of Dad's and mine. The *Korea Maru* had not sunk, but had been cast adrift by the panic-stricken crew.

A month later my sister and I sailed for Seattle aboard the *Empress of Australia* under the care of some kindly missionaries; Mother and Dad we left in Kobe. Dad lost his leg up to the knee, but later he and Mother joined us in Seattle, where we have lived ever since.

"SUDDEN DEATH" ... Foiled for Once

"My lesson helped me,"
says Long Islander,
"maybe it will help others"



*Pedestrians need
headlights, too,
thinks Gordon M.
Thompson.*

"SUDDEN DEATH walks by the roadside at night as well as riding the cushions . . . as I never fully realized until the night I came so near to playing the title role," says Gordon M. Thompson.

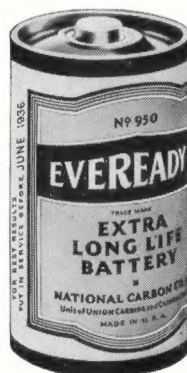
"Two cars racing neck and neck came up behind me. Walking on the left side of the road, as I should, I paid no attention . . . until I was about ten seconds from eternity. At this last instant I turned, looked into the jaws of death, and jumped practically out of them into the brambles in the ditch.

"I never walk at night any more without my Eveready flashlight . . . loaded with fresh, dependable Eveready batteries. You know, if you drive a car, that it's mighty hard to see people by the roadside even on a clear night. Maybe you've had a close

call, too? All I can say is don't tempt Fate. You can walk the roads in safety if you carry a flashlight loaded with fresh Eveready batteries."

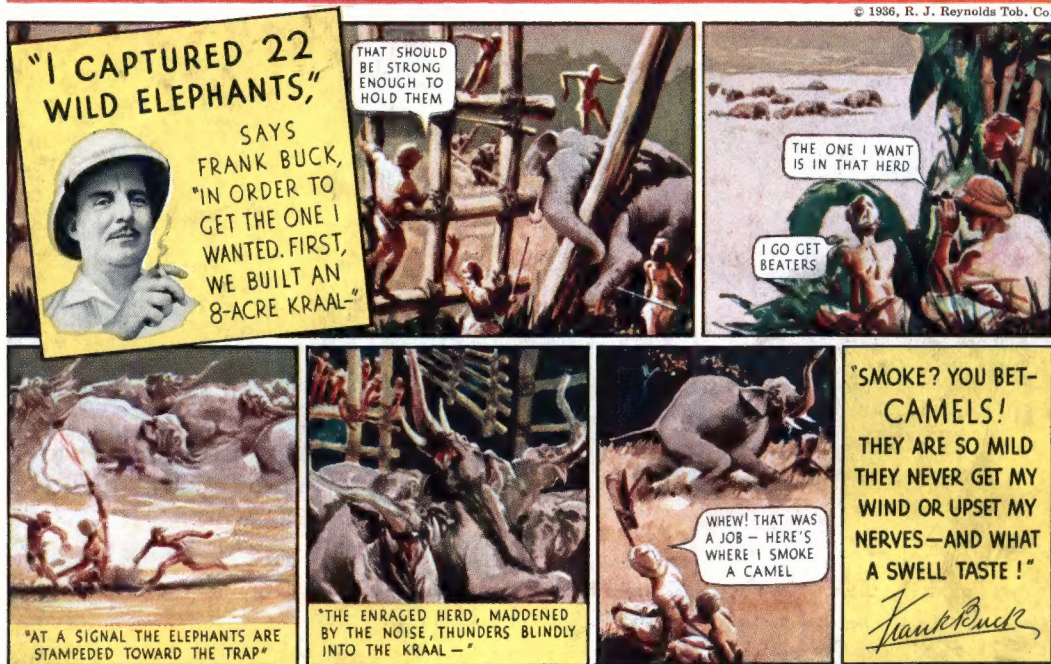
**EVEREADY
BATTERIES
ARE FRESH
BATTERIES**

**ONE REASON
WHY THEY
LAST LONGER**

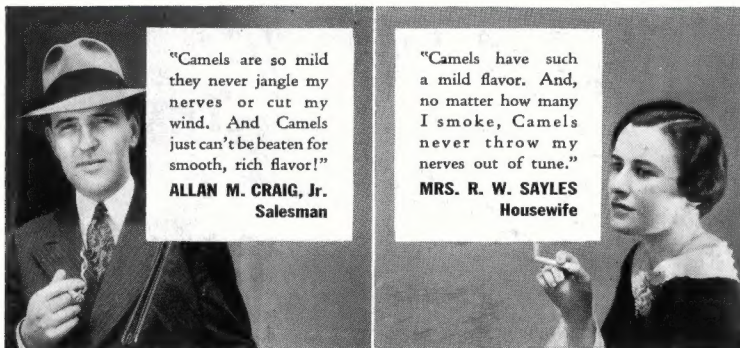


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